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A TALE OF REMORSE FROM THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

WRITTEN BY JAKOB CRANE



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Lies in the dust : a tale
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LIES IN THE DUST

WITHDRAWN

lies in the dust

A tale of **remorse** from the Salem witch trials

WRITTEN BY JAKOB CRANE

ART BY TIMOTHY DECKER

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ISLANDPORT  PRESS

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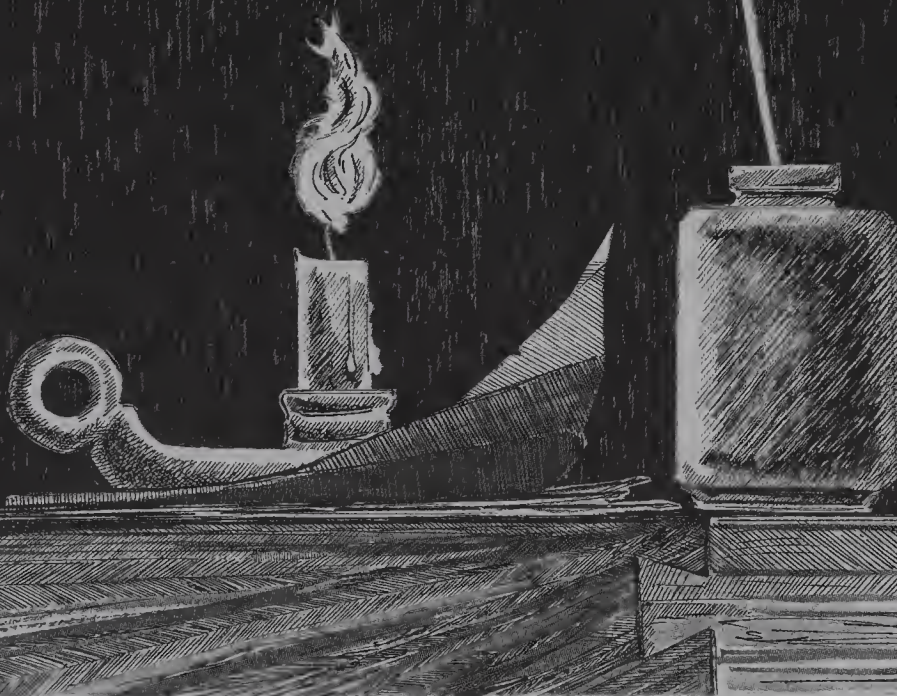
Dedicated to The Spottswoods—Jakob Crane

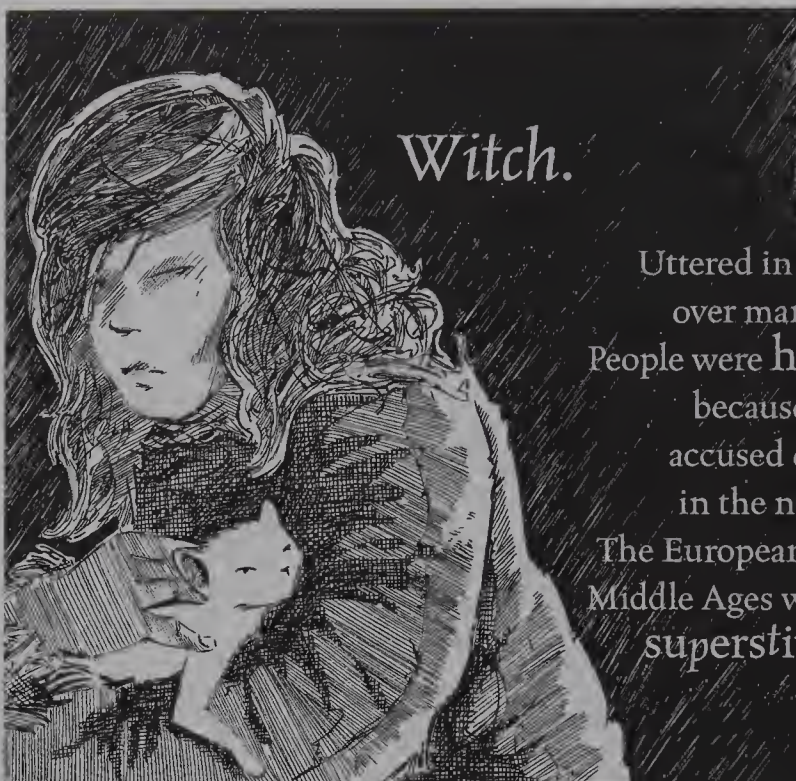
for h.e.l., lost at sea, probably . . . —Timothy Decker

INTRODUCTION

What is the true
power of a word?

A word crafted
into an **accusation** can be
wielded like a **dagger**.





Witch.



Uttered in many tongues,
over many centuries.
People were **hunted** down and
because of a word,
accused of witchcraft
in the name of God.
The European landscape of the
Middle Ages was marked by this
superstition and fear.



The word was
a force and a
nightmare.

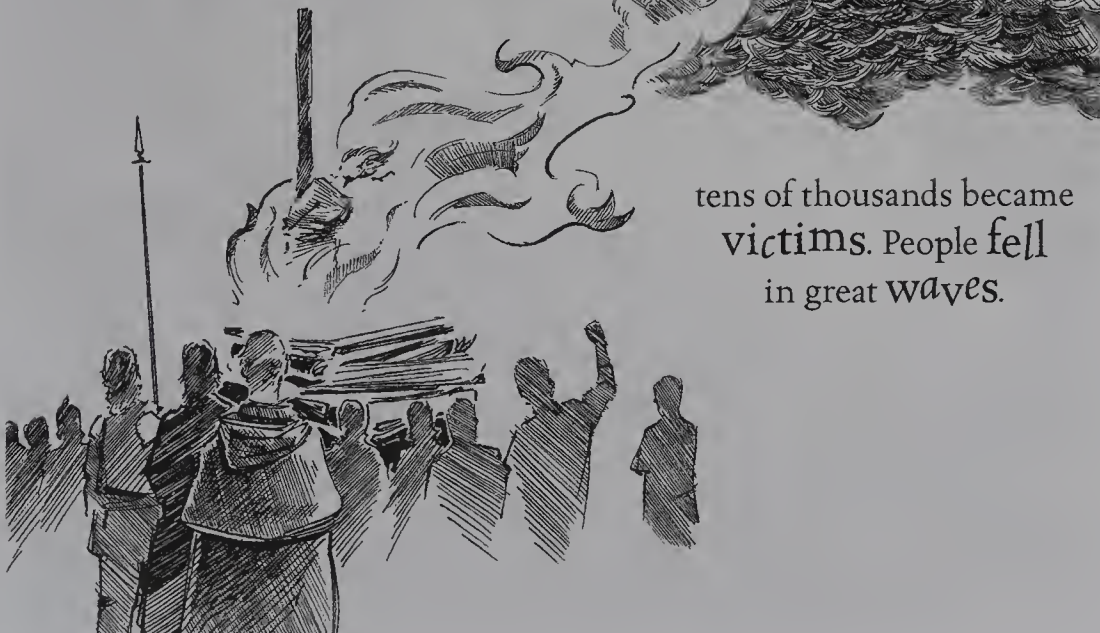
Witch.

Accusations led to executions. Those suspected of witchcraft, or simply called "witch," were thought to be the Devil's partner.



The poor, those living on the fringe, were the likeliest to be accused.

From the 1300s to the 1600s,



tens of thousands became victims. People fell in great waves.

IN 1692, THOSE WAVES SWEEPED ACROSS
THE OCEAN, TO A NEW WORLD

MASSACHUSETTS

DANVERS

ROYAL
SIDE

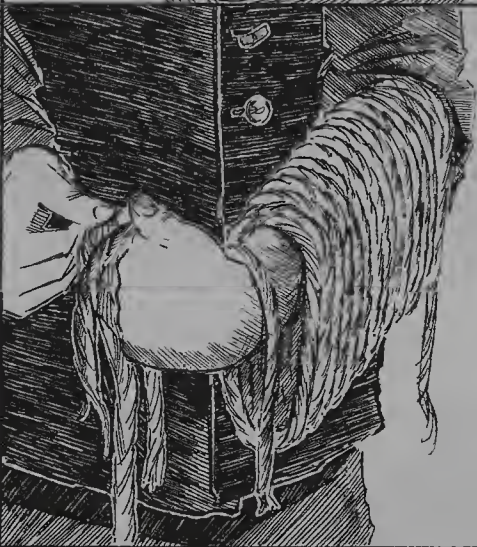
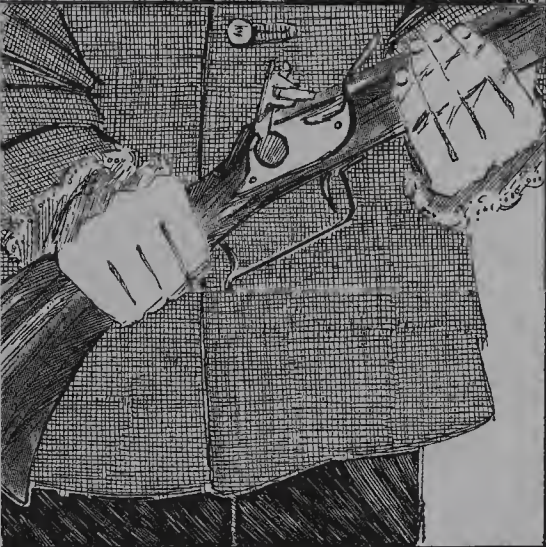
NORTHFIELDS

SALEM



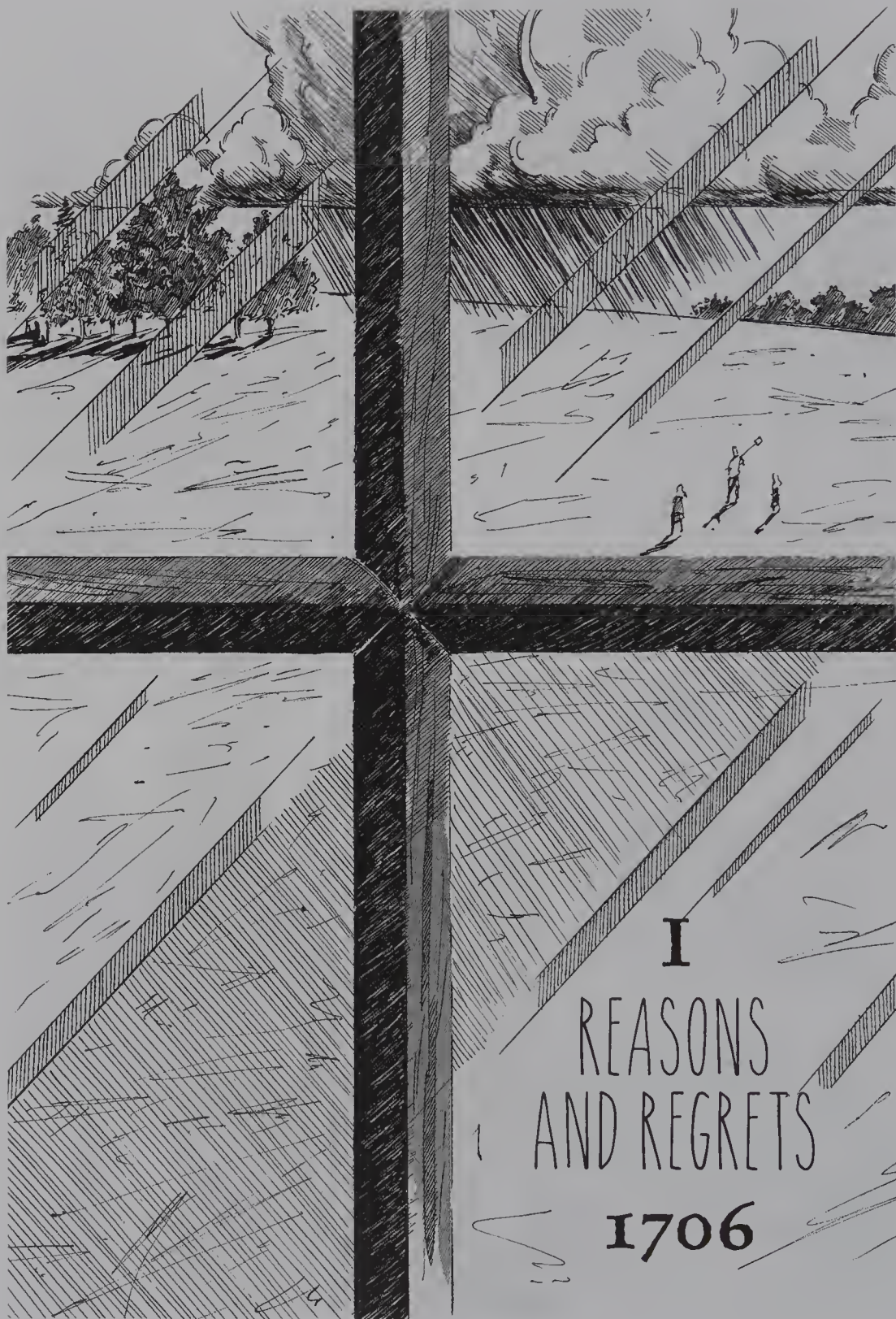




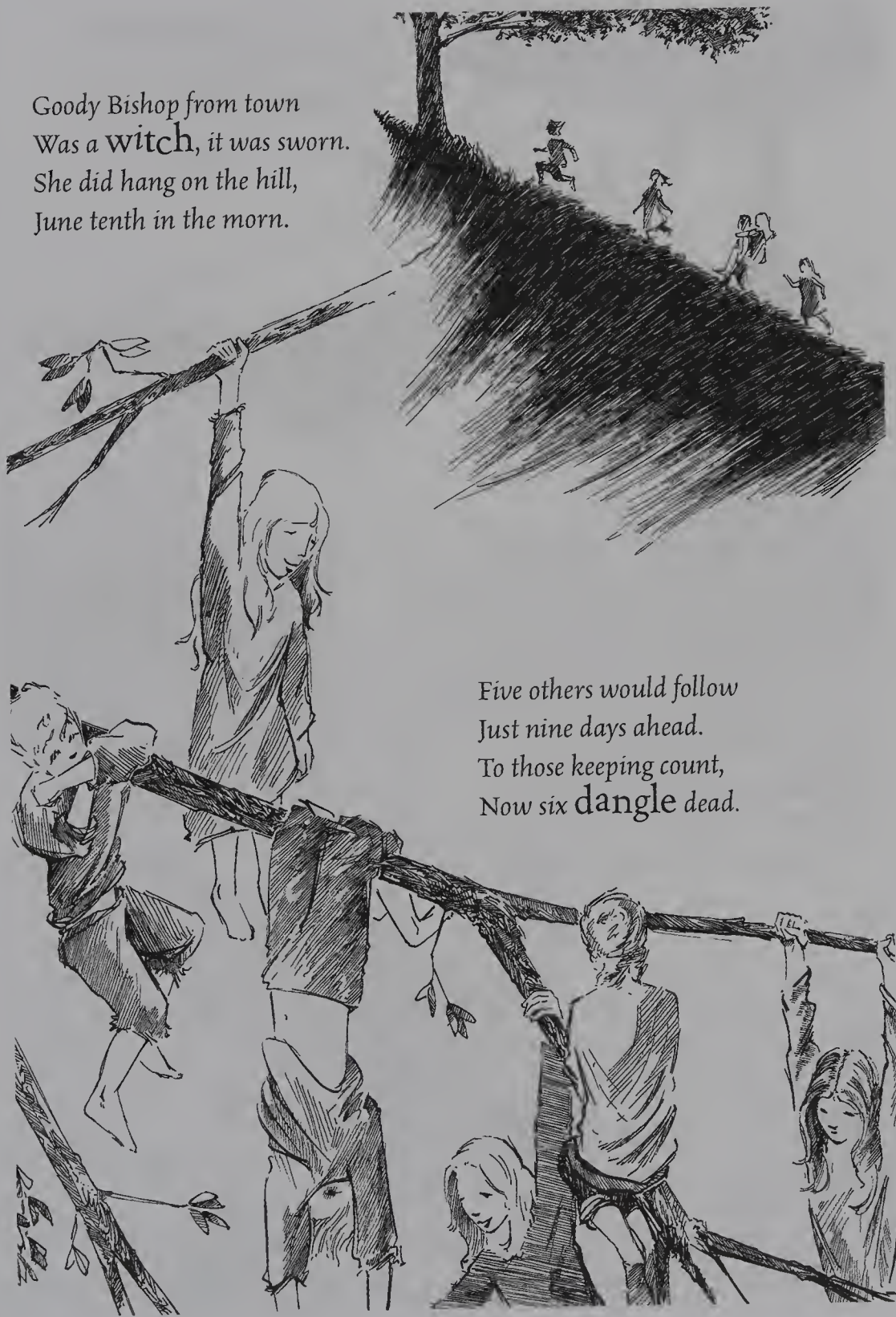




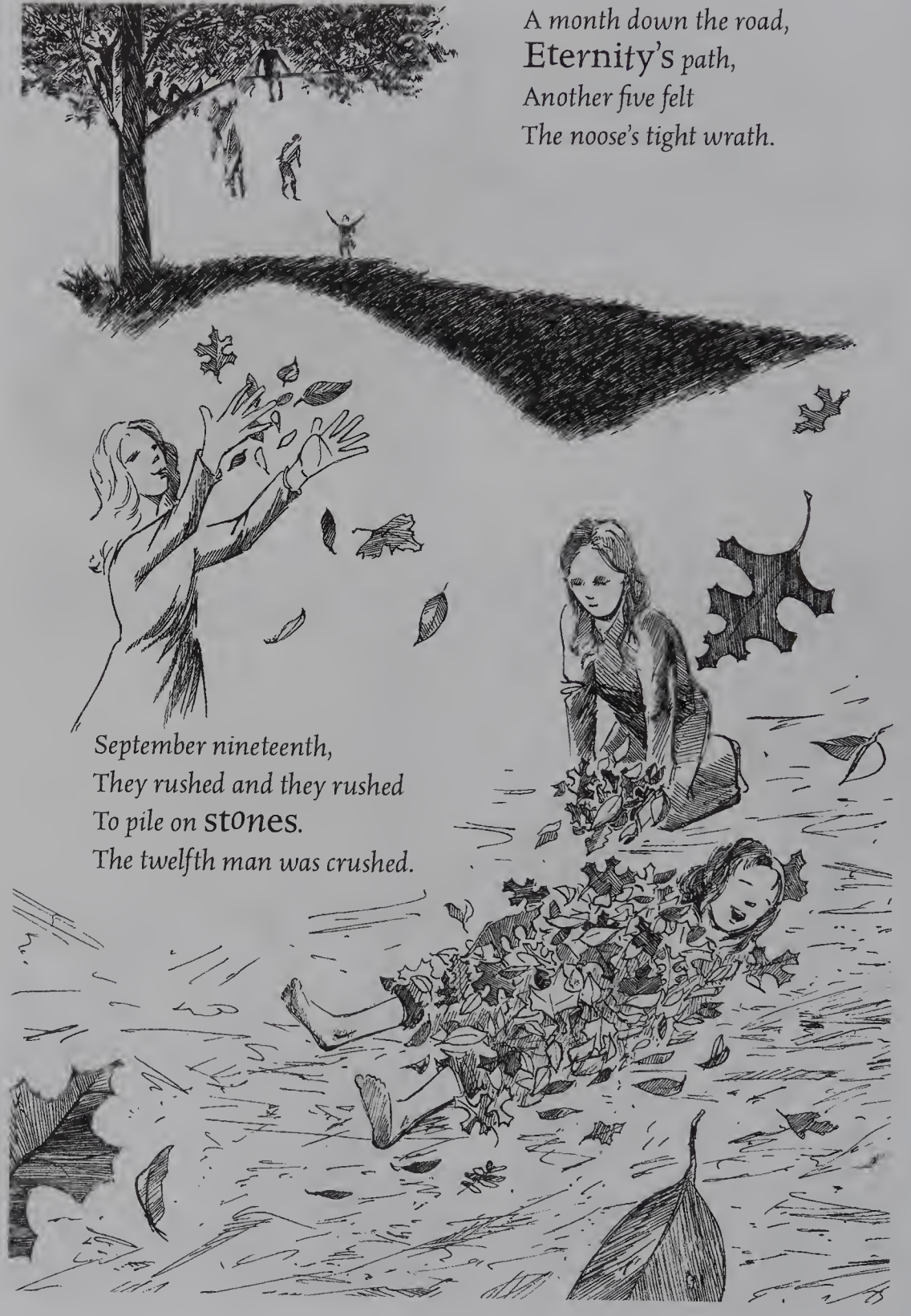




Goody Bishop from town
Was a **witch**, it was sworn.
She did hang on the hill,
June tenth in the morn.



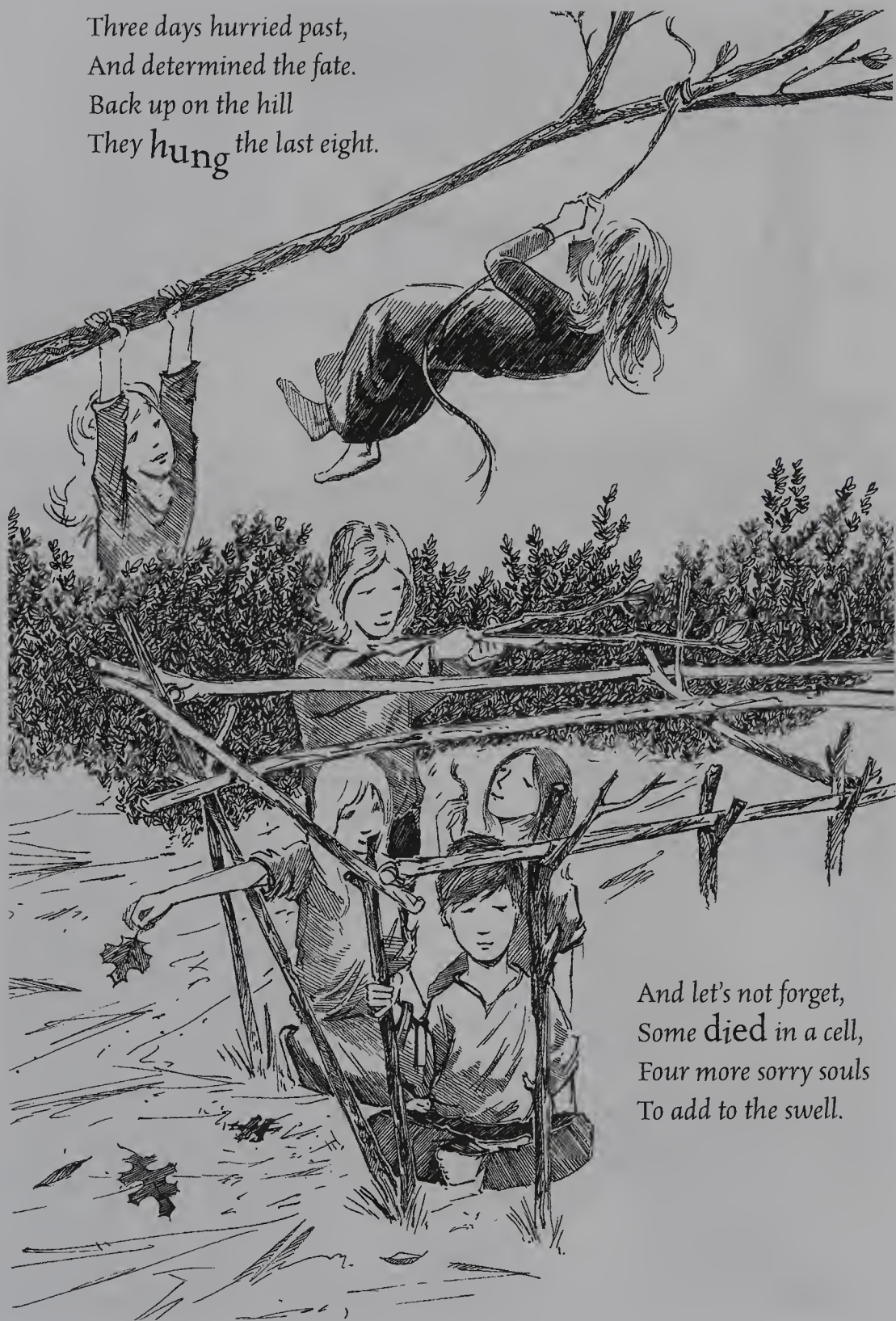
Five others would follow
Just nine days ahead.
To those keeping count,
Now six **dangle** dead.



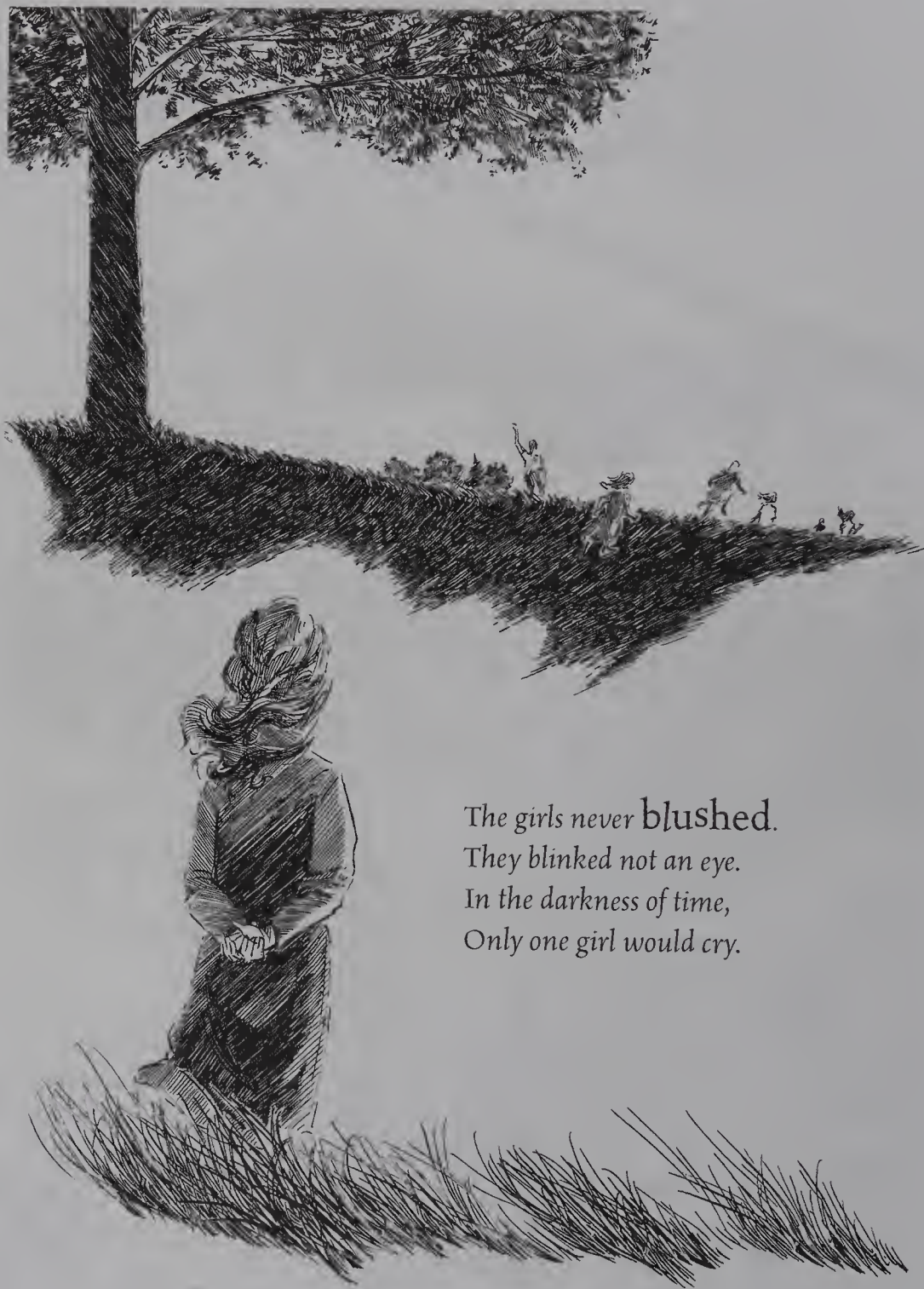
A month down the road,
Eternity's path,
Another five felt
The noose's tight wrath.

September nineteenth,
They rushed and they rushed
To pile on stones.
The twelfth man was crushed.

Three days hurried past,
And determined the fate.
Back up on the hill
They **hung** the last eight.



And let's not forget,
Some **died** in a cell,
Four more sorry souls
To add to the swell.



The girls never blushed.
They blinked not an eye.
In the darkness of time,
Only one girl would cry.





Ann, supper is ready.

Deliverance . . .

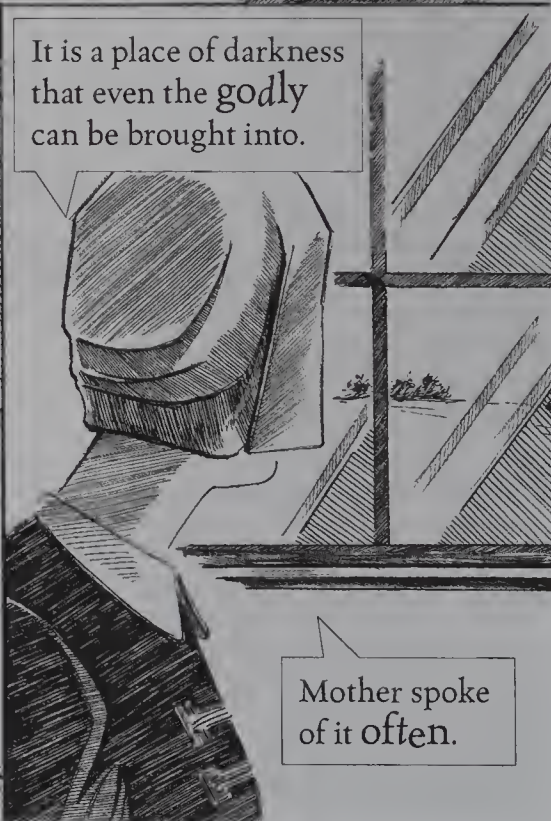
did Mother
ever **tell** you
about the
hidden world?



What do
you **mean**,
Ann?



It is a place of darkness
that even the **godly**
can be brought into.



The world between
where we live and
where the **Devil**
tries to **control** us.

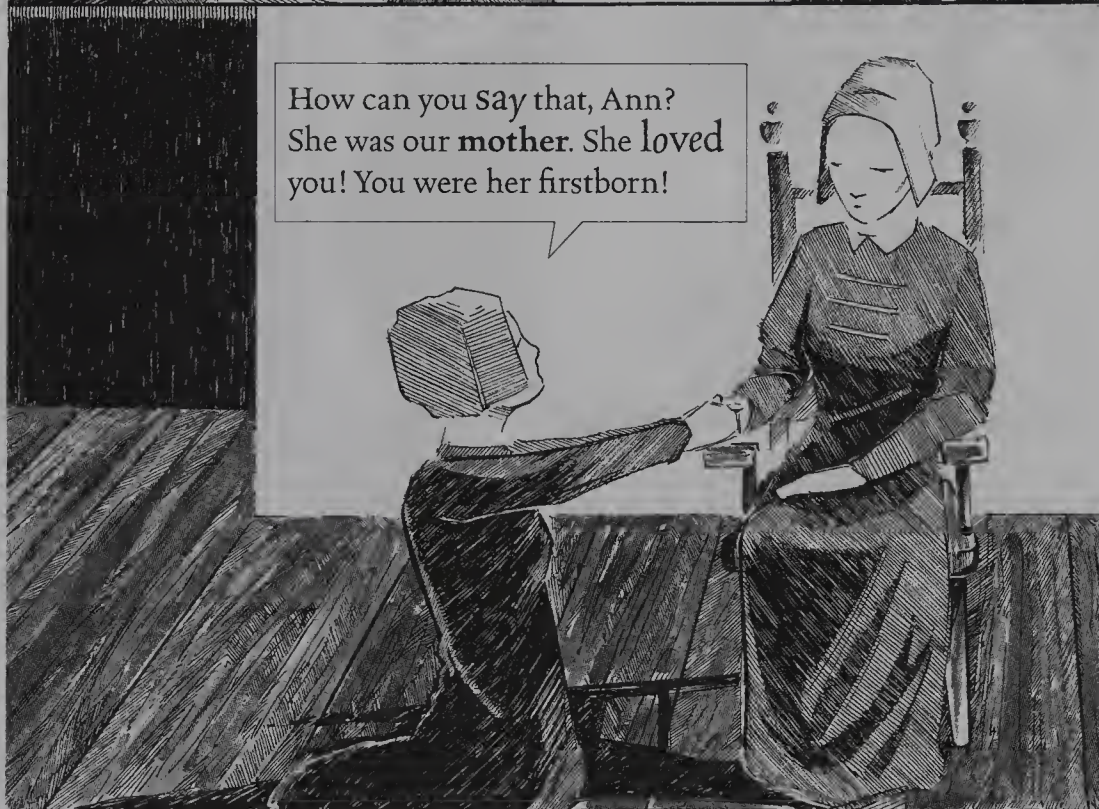


Mother spoke
of it often.

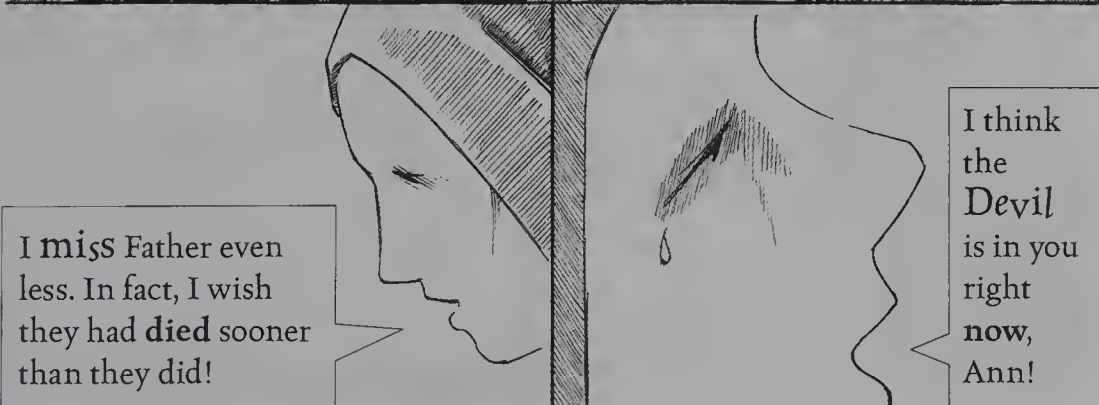


I miss
Mother so
much.

I don't.

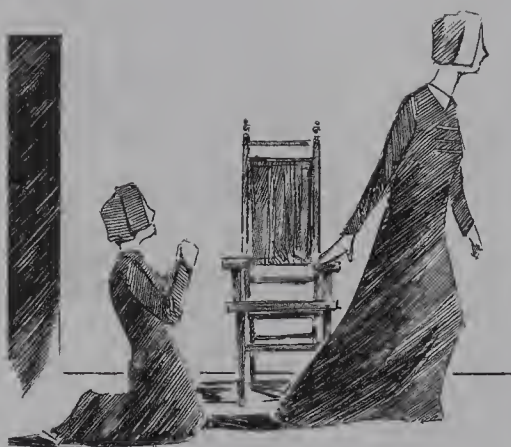


How can you say that, Ann?
She was our **mother**. She **loved**
you! You were her firstborn!

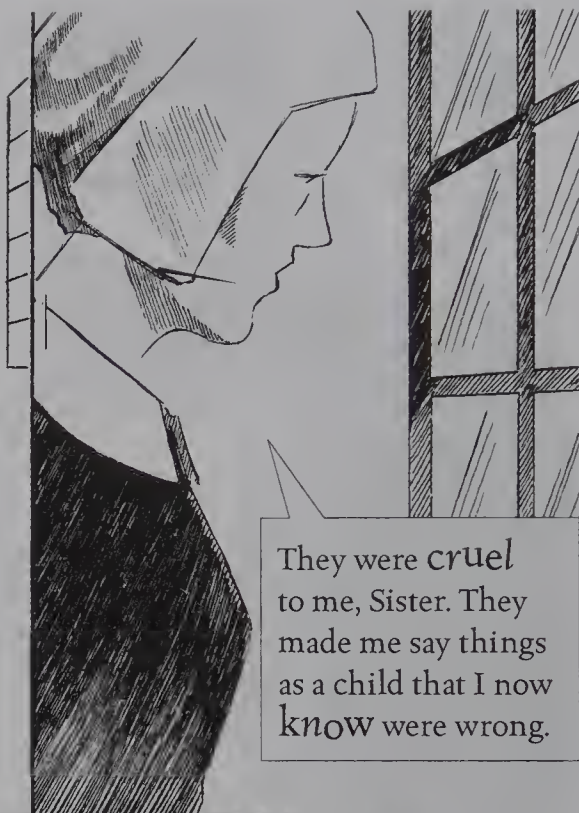


I miss Father even
less. In fact, I wish
they had **died** sooner
than they did!

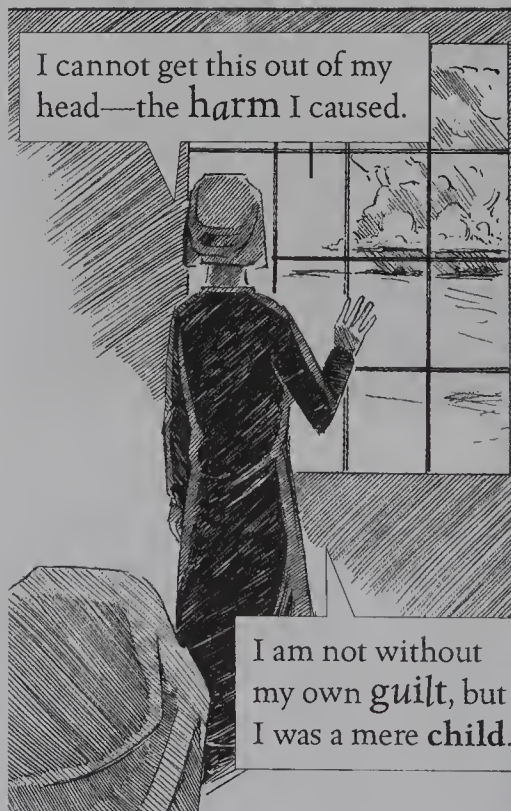
I think
the
Devil
is in you
right
now,
Ann!



Why are you saying these things about **Mother** and **Father**, God rest their souls?

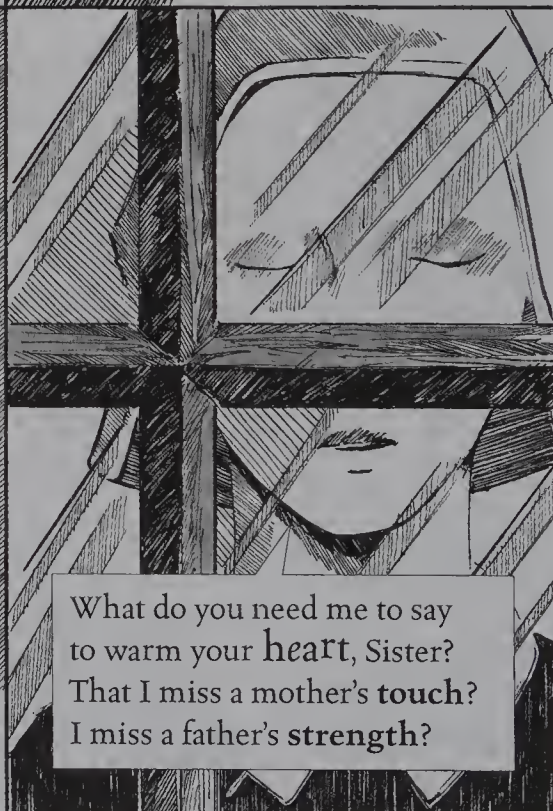


They were **cruel** to me, Sister. They made me say things as a child that I now **know** were wrong.



I cannot get this out of my head—the **harm** I caused.

I am not without my own **guilt**, but I was a mere **child**.



What do you need me to say to warm your **heart**, Sister? That I miss a mother's **touch**? I miss a father's **strength**?

YES! That is **exactly** how you should feel!

I never knew those things. I was **never** afforded that **privilege**.

Perhaps that is why, when they died, my **heart** never skipped a **beat**.

Perhaps that is why I have **been able** to be the **eldest** of this family ...

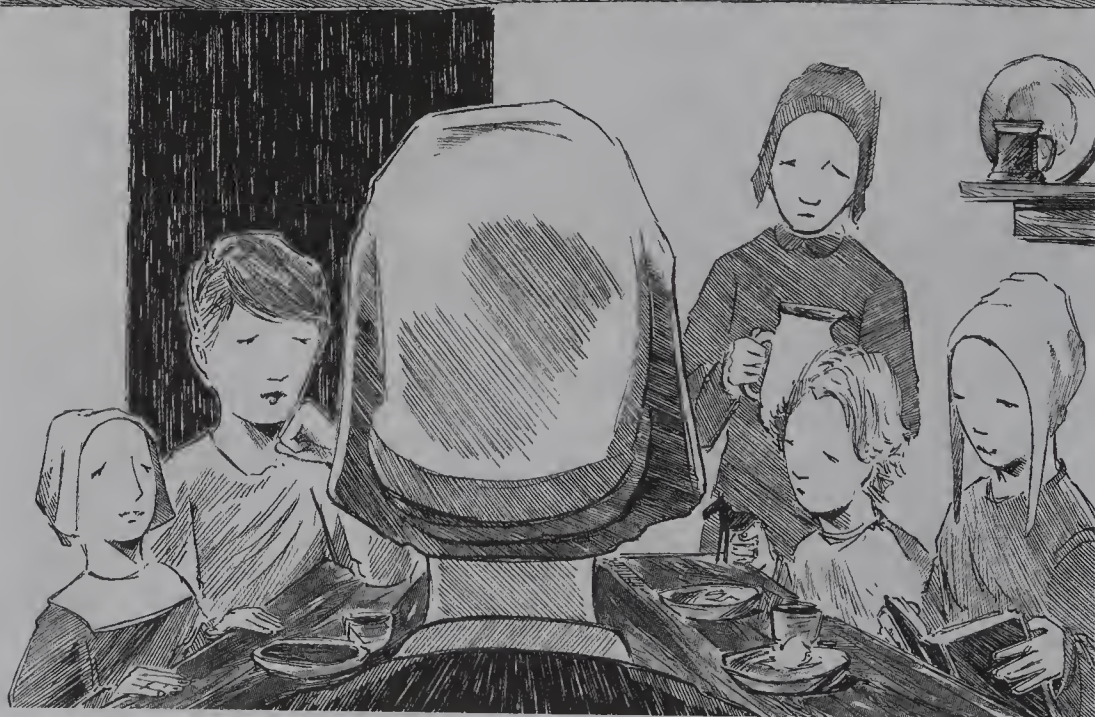
... and show you all **love**. Perhaps ...

I don't want to **speak** of this. Mother and Father **loved** us, and loved God.

Then we shall **end this** now, Sister. I'm sorry to have **upset** you so. That was never my **intention**.

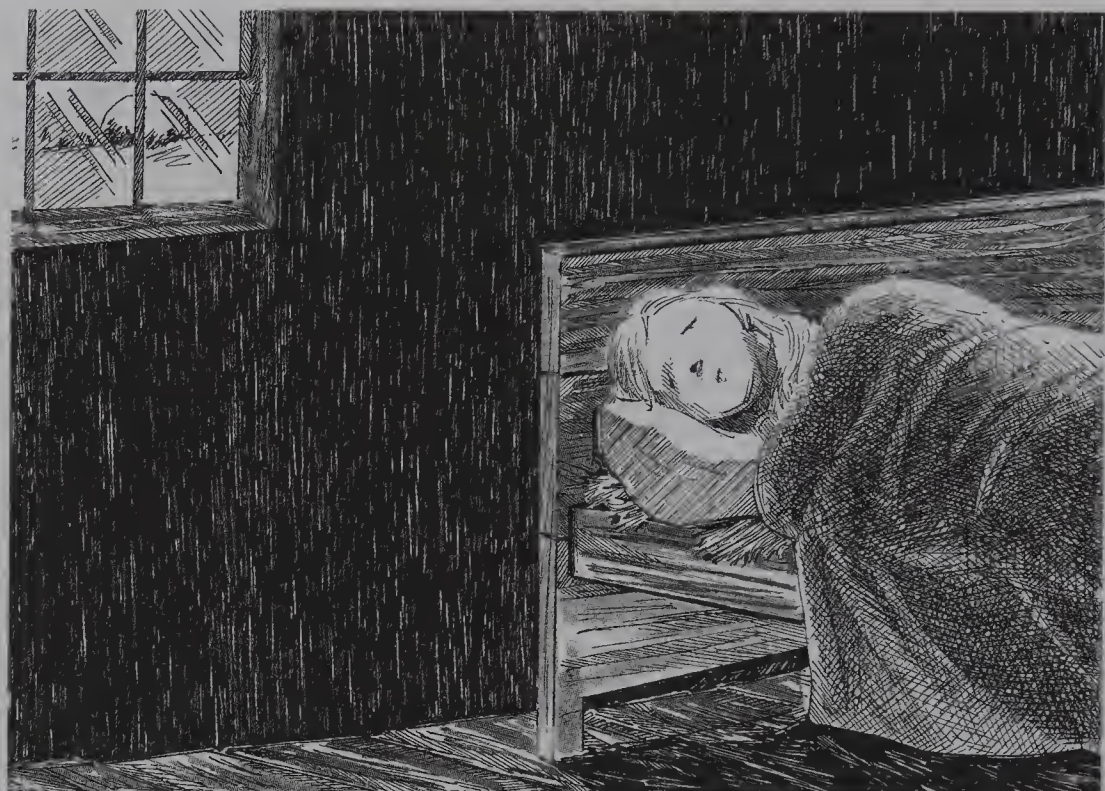
We have fixed supper. Let us go now
and put all this **behind** us, Ann.

Yes, let us do that.



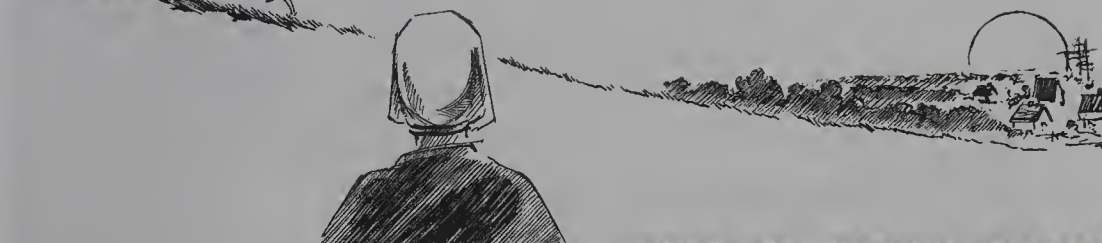


II
THE TREE
1706





The tree. A **strange** sight to see a little boy playing beneath it.



Boy, why do you **play** here?

This is *my* tree. That's why I play here!

What do you mean, this is *your* tree? It belongs to nobody. This land does not belong to your family. **Why** do you **play** here?



I *like* it here. Nothing gives shade on hot days quite like this tree.

I suppose that's **true**.

Why is it that you ask about this tree? Should I **not** be playing here for some **reason**?

Many **bad** things happened here. Have you not been told of the trials of '92? This was the **very hanging tree** where all of those innocents died.

I . . . I didn't know this was **that** tree. How do you know? Were you there?





I **was** there. I stood on that spot near the big rocks and **watched** with my friends as the accused were **hung**. Those days cast as big a shadow as the tree itself.



What is your name?



Ann.



You're Ann . . .
Ann Putnam?



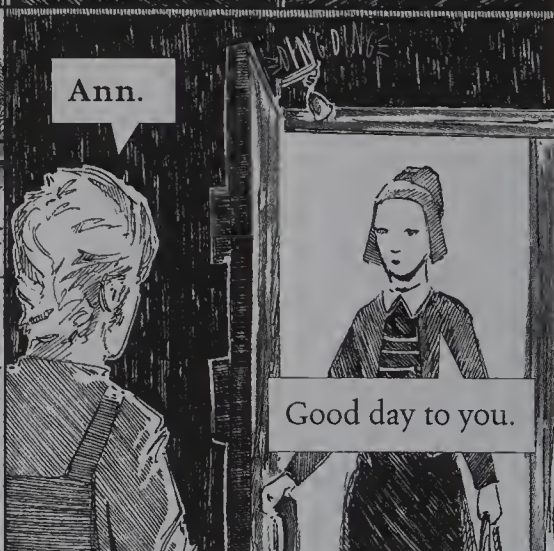
Yes.



I'm not supposed to speak with you. None of us are. I must go.

I mean you no **harm**, boy. What is **your** name?







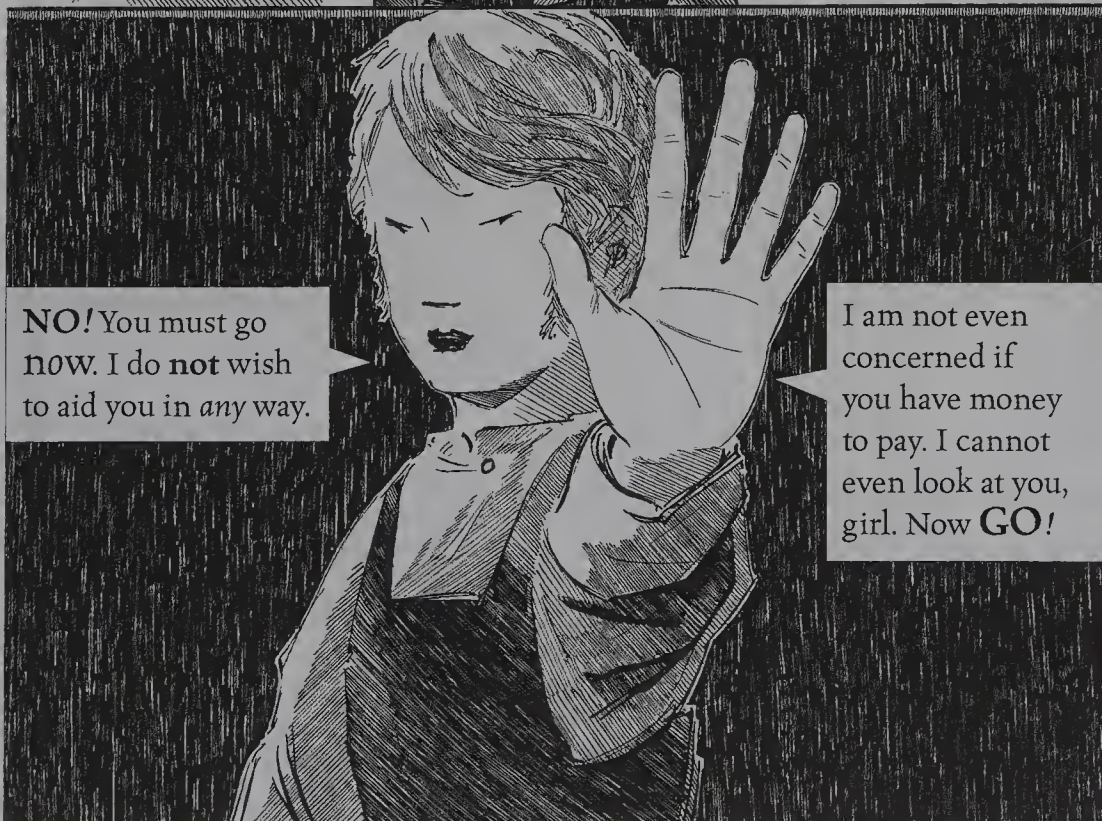
Now, Ann . . . I must kindly ask you to leave my shop.



No, please!



I just need a few things. I just . . . I had *nobody* to send today. **PLEASE!**



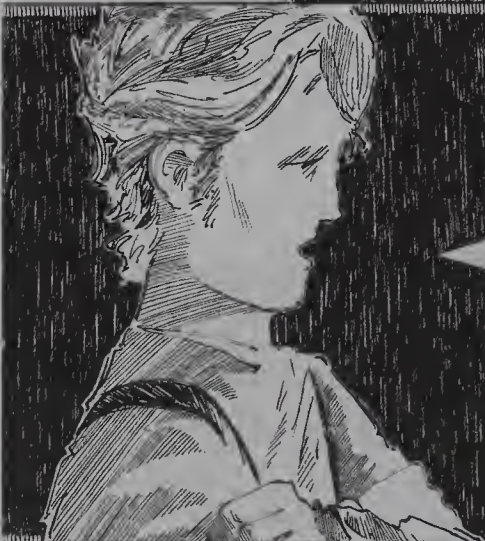
NO! You must go **now**. I do **not** wish to aid you in *any* way.

I am not even concerned if you have money to pay. I cannot even look at you, girl. Now **GO!**

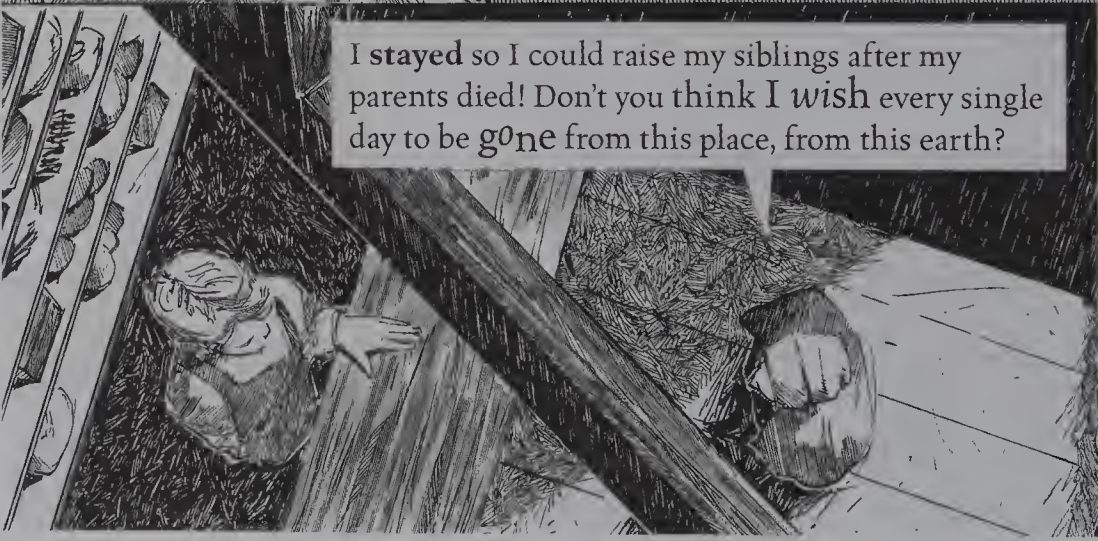


I was just a girl, sir!

Can there ever be forgiveness
cast upon me for my sins?
I cannot bring back the
dead, but I *can* say I am **not**
the child I once was!



No matter—what the lot of you did
was **unforgivable**. Not only in my
eyes, but in the eyes of God. You and
the other accusers would be wise to
leave this place and let us try to *heal*.

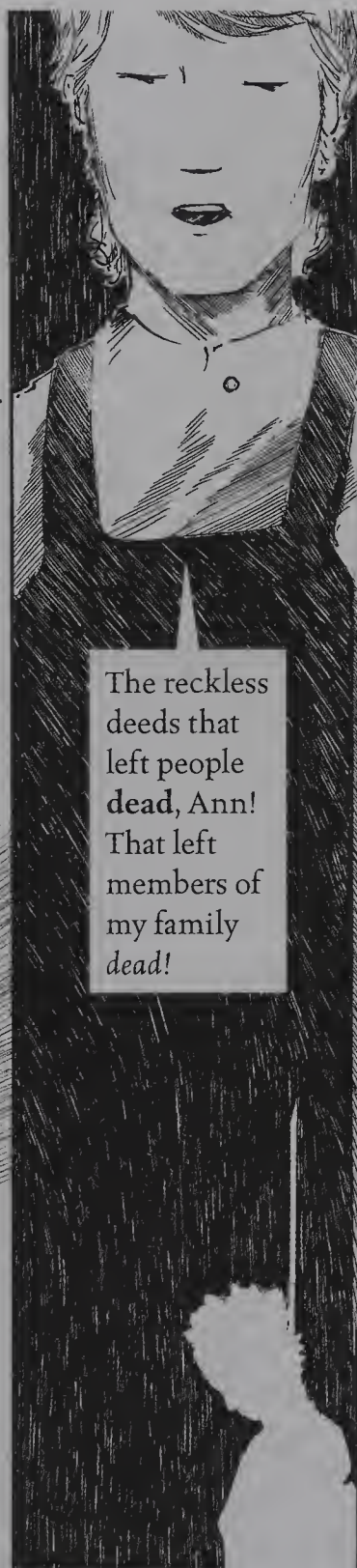


I **stayed** so I could raise my siblings after my
parents died! Don't you think I *wish* every single
day to be **gone** from this place, from this earth?

I **stayed** because nobody would have cared for them. It cost me **everything**—my sense of **being**.



I am only known for my **childhood** and the reckless deeds . . .

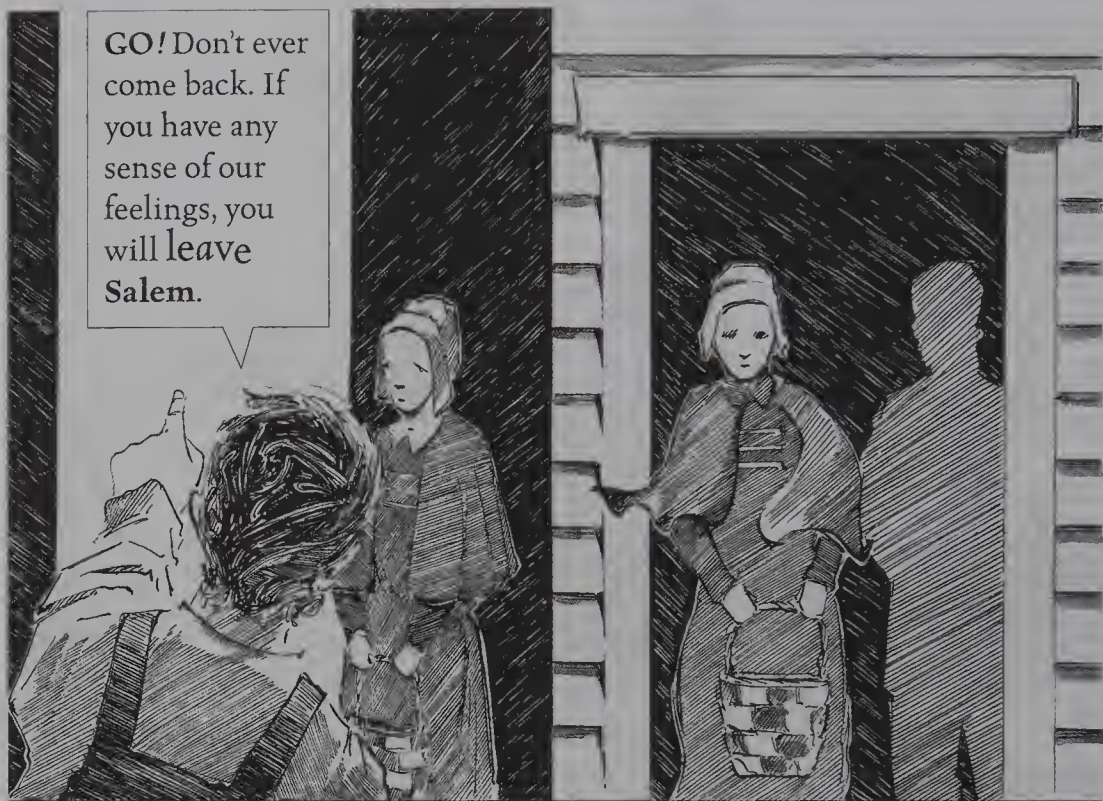


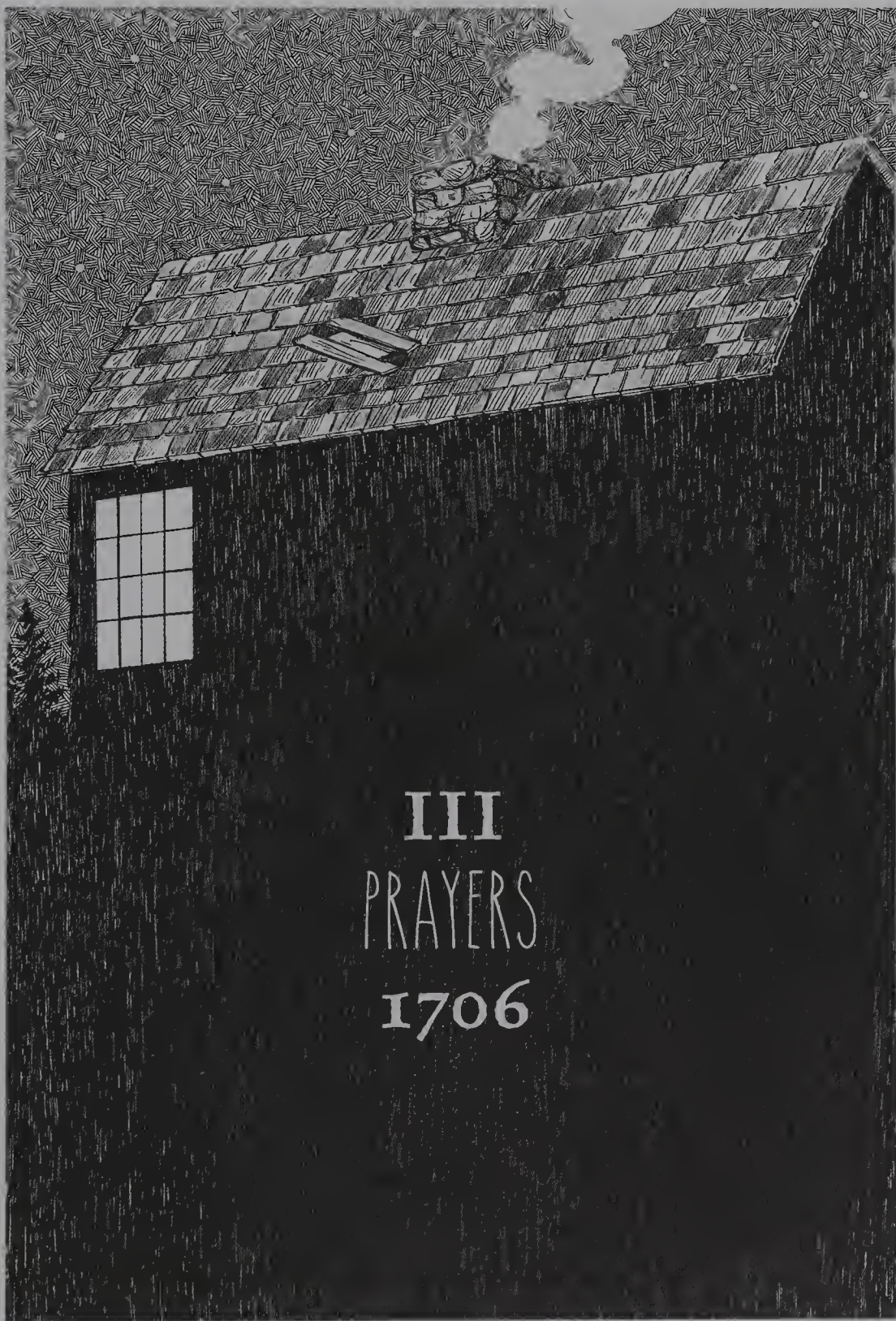
The reckless deeds that left people **dead**, Ann! That left members of my family **dead**!

It is *you* who is being **judged** now, and I think that **judgment** is quite fitting.

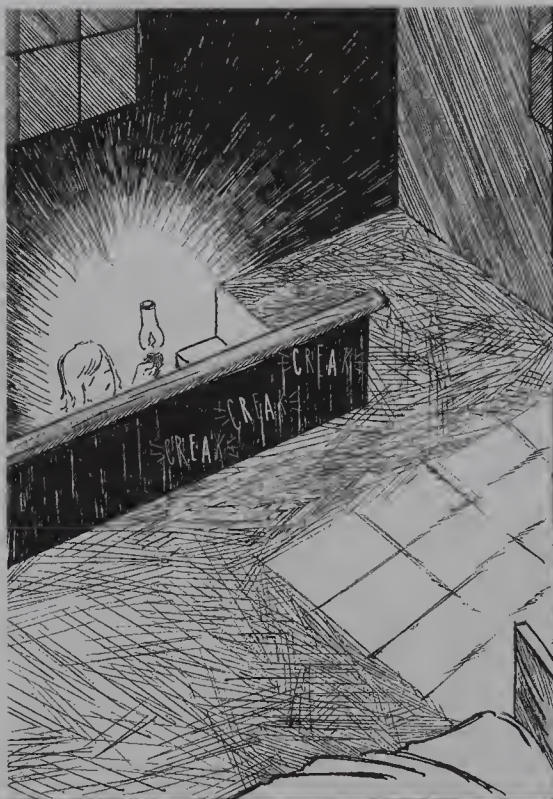


GO! Don't ever
come back. If
you have any
sense of our
feelings, you
will leave
Salem.





III
PRAYERS
1706



I should make my way
under the covers. My knees
feel like **stone** from pressing
against these **cold** boards.

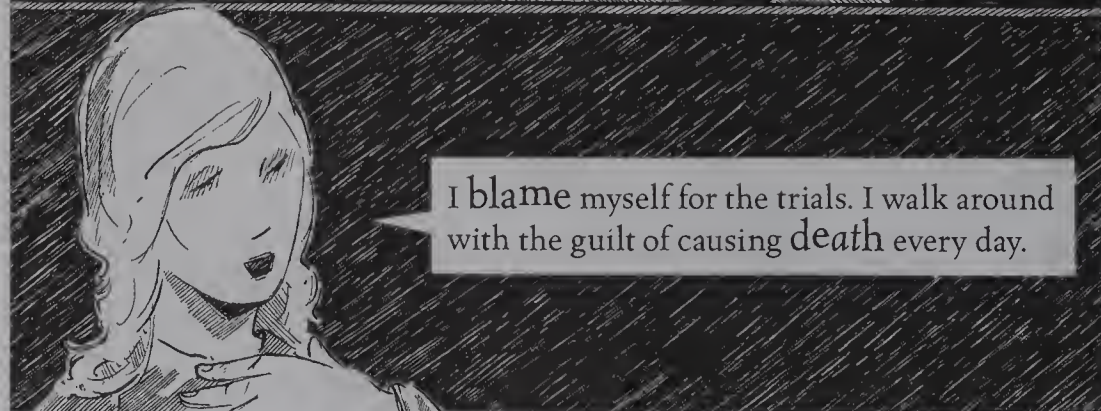
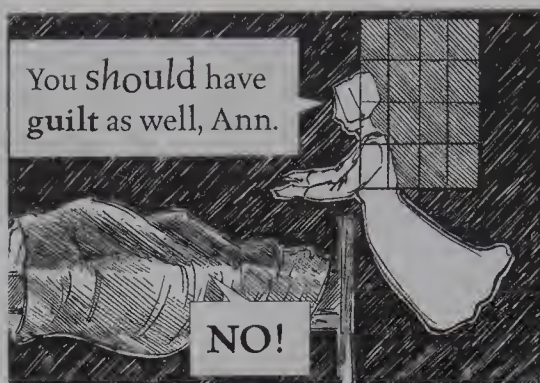
You are lucky
to **have**
feeling, girl.


I **heard** the
words you spoke
to your sister. I
know who you
blame.

I must be **seeing** things.
I must be asleep. There is
nobody in this room.


These covers will close off
this **nightmare** for good.

You are **dead**, Mother.







Ann, you **need** to **hear** what I have to say.




I am still asleep. This is not happening.



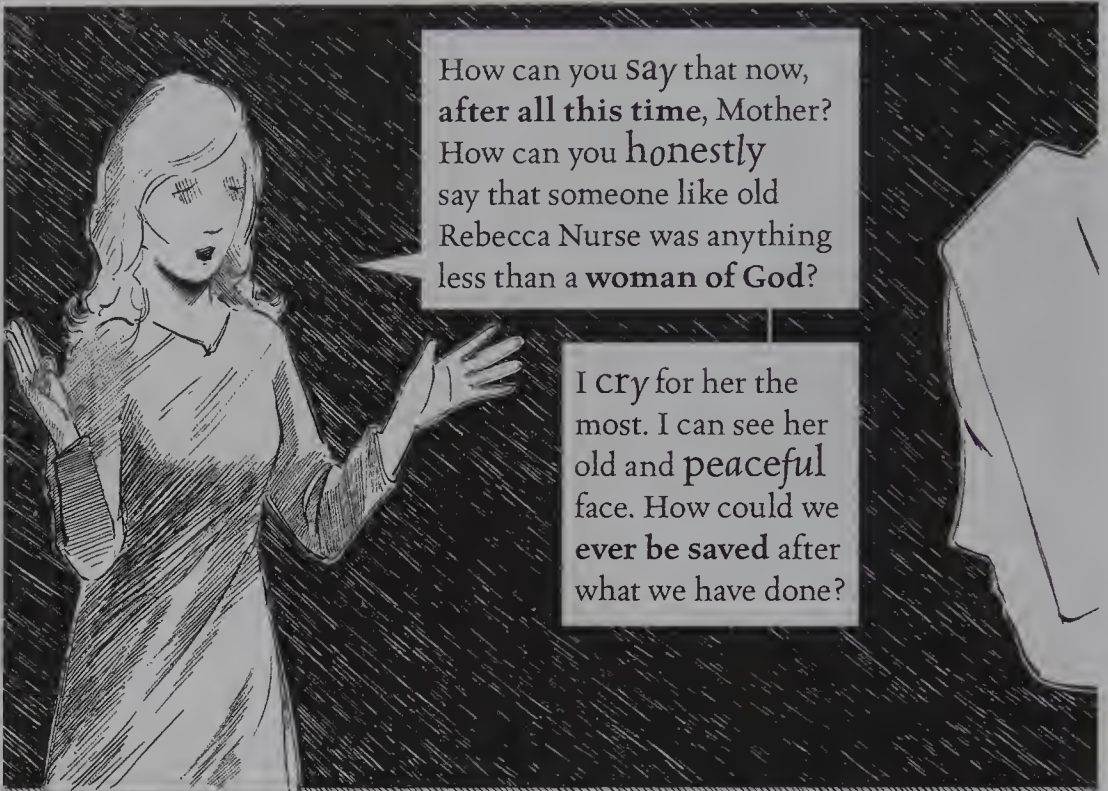
Each **night** that I lay in my bed, **each day** that I walk outside, I **see** their faces. I see them hanging on the hill. I see what we **caused**.



I **see now** how you and Father let it **all** happen—made it **all** happen. You had motives. You **urged** us to **accuse** some. Those you disliked. Those you **wanted** something from.

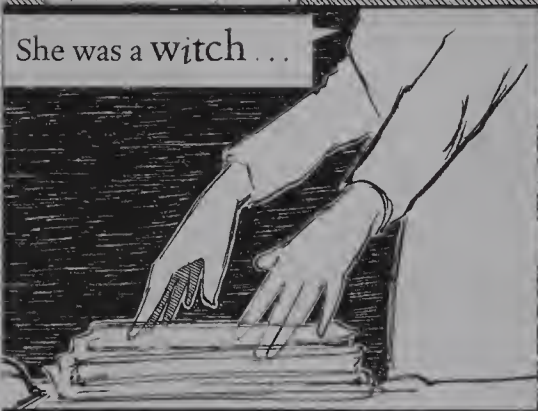


I did not **cause** anything. They caused it. They **deserved** to die that way. It was God's choice—not ours!



How can you say that now,
after all this time, Mother?
How can you honestly
say that someone like old
Rebecca Nurse was anything
less than a **woman of God**?

I cry for her the
most. I can see her
old and peaceful
face. How could we
ever be saved after
what we have done?

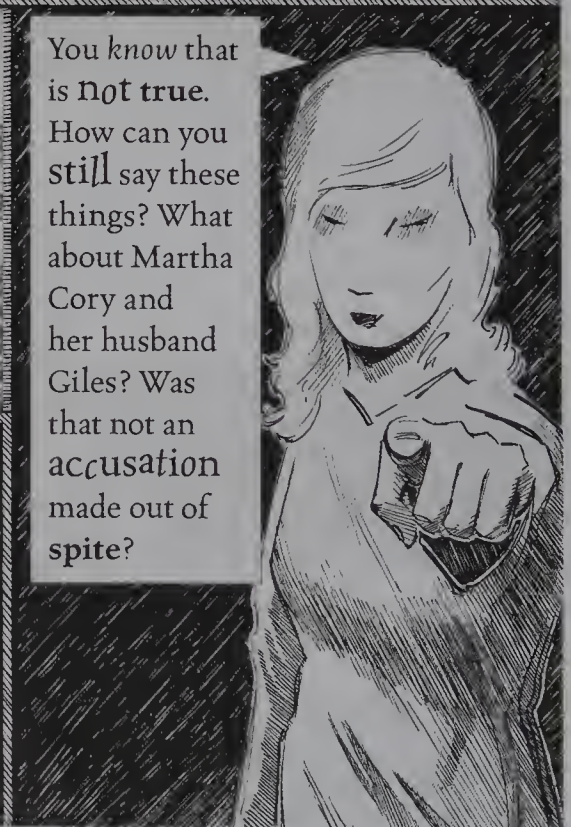


She was a **witch** ...



she **hung** as she deserved.

You know that
is **not true**.
How can you
still say these
things? What
about Martha
Cory and
her husband
Giles? Was
that not an
accusation
made out of
spite?



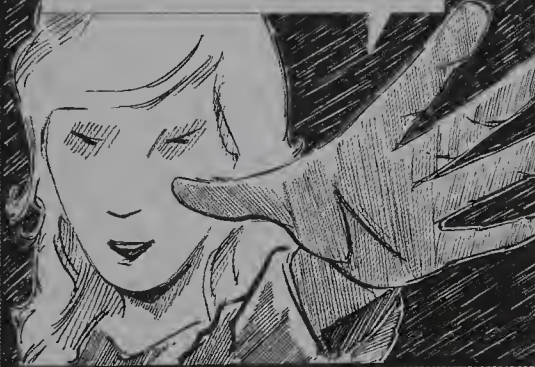
In the eyes of God, they were already **damned**. They received what all witches deserve, what **any** person who signs **Satan's** book deserves.



You are **wrong**! Even in **death** you are **wrong**! Why do you torment my dreams?



I wish you away! Leave my dreams now! You are not here ... I **must** wake!

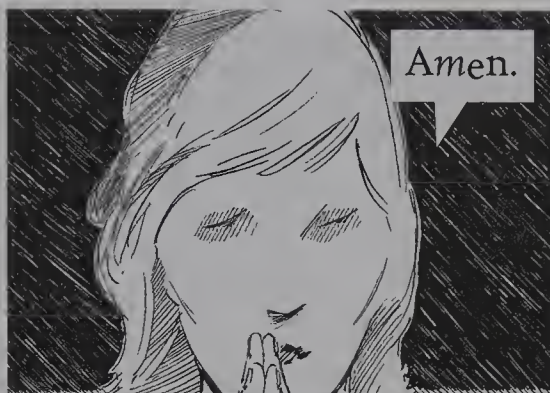


The **Witch Trials** will **never** be out of your **mind**. You were a part of it. You will **always** be a **part** of it.



Our Father, which art in heaven . . .

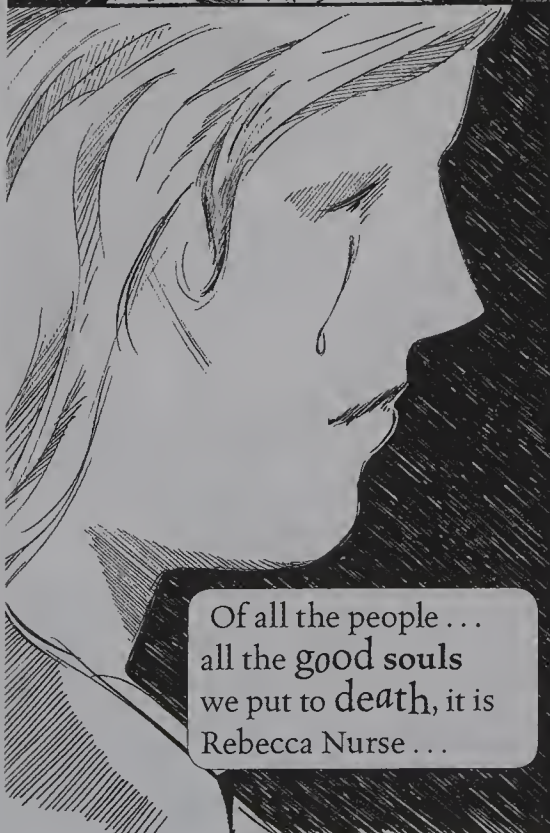




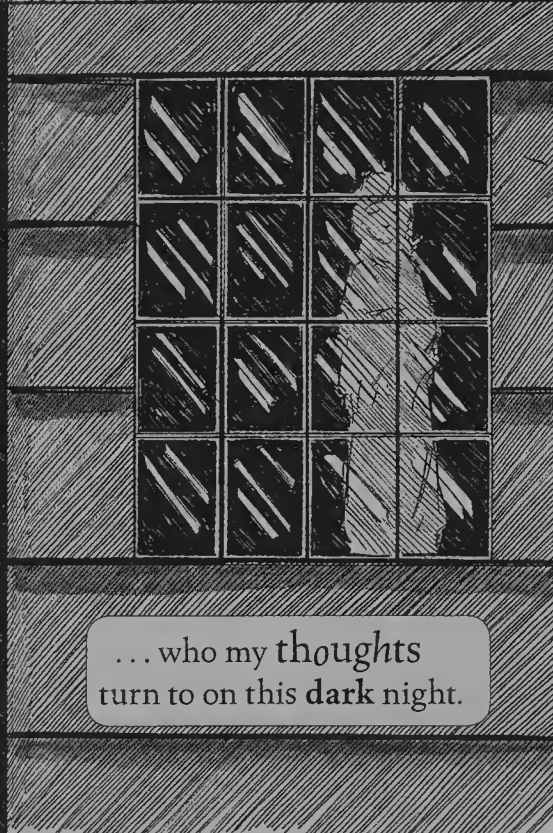
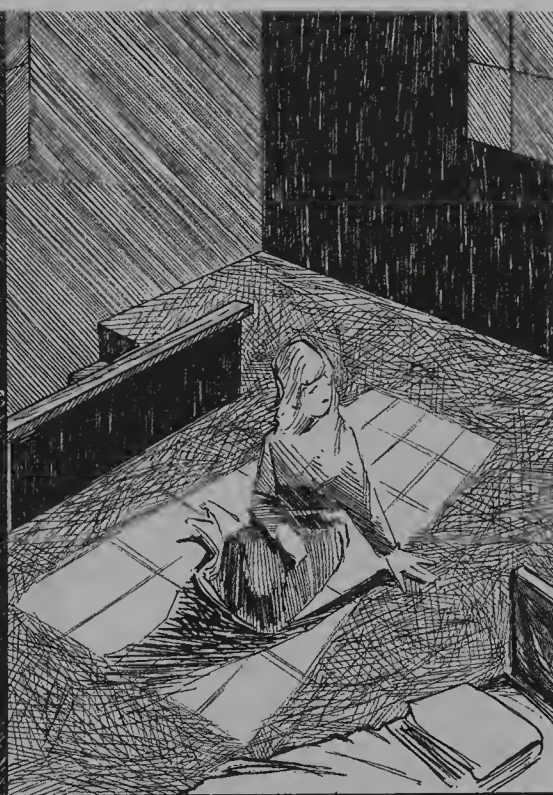
Amen.



Amen.

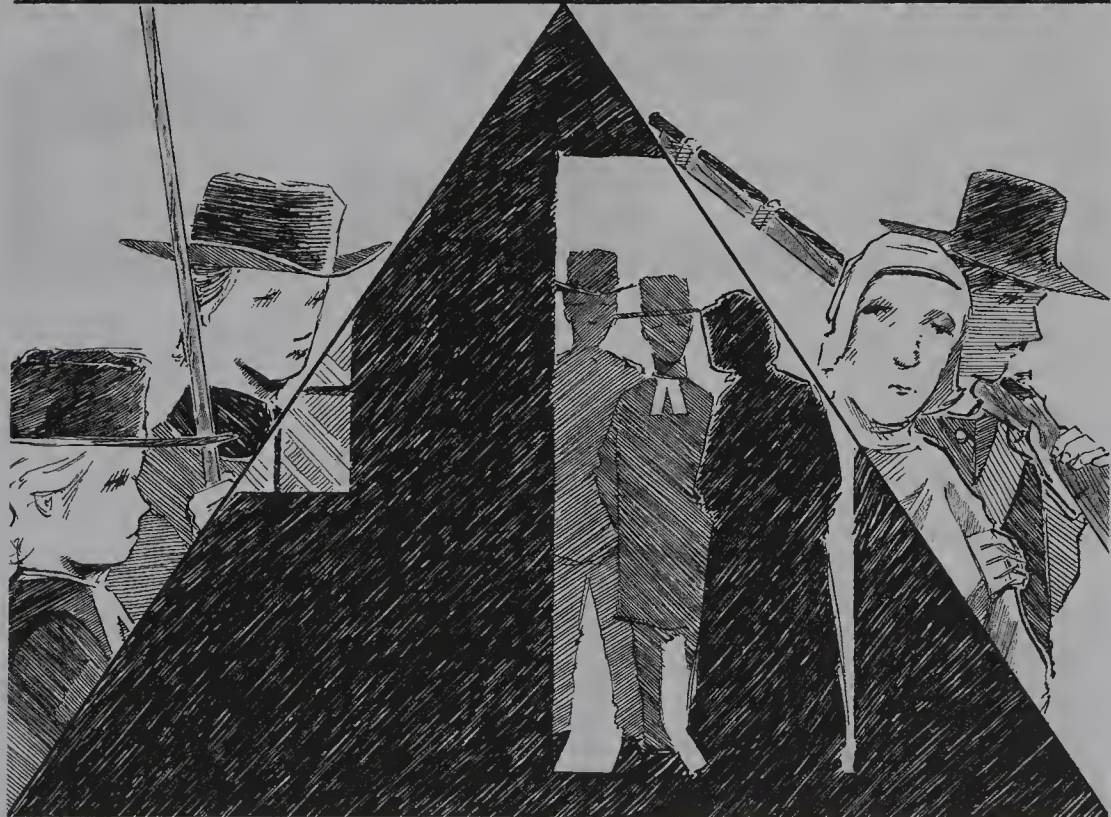
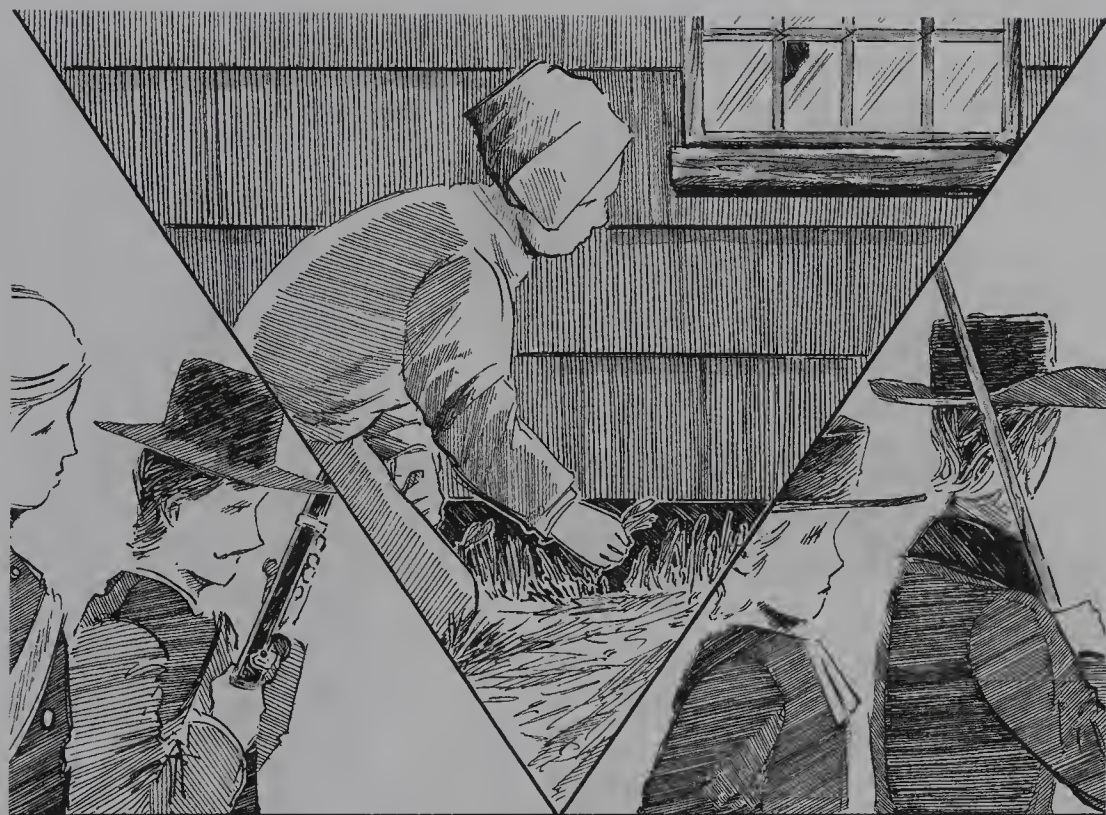


Of all the people ...
all the good souls
we put to death, it is
Rebecca Nurse ...



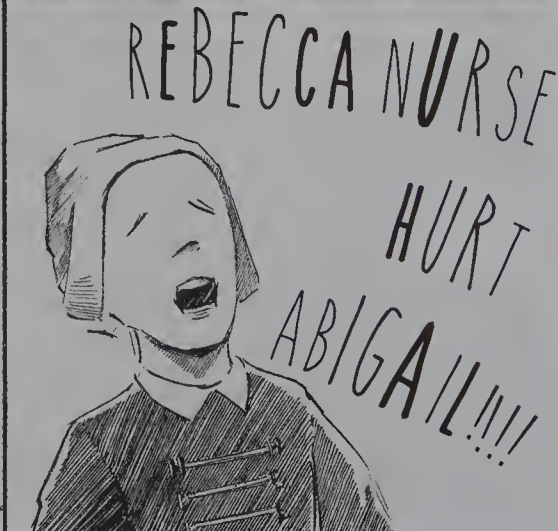
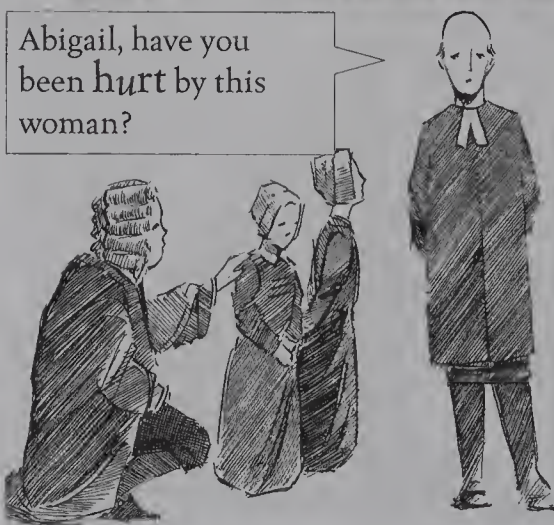
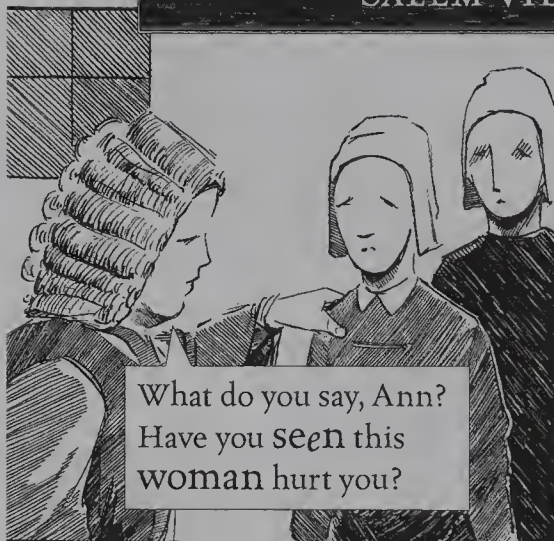
... who my thoughts
turn to on this dark night.

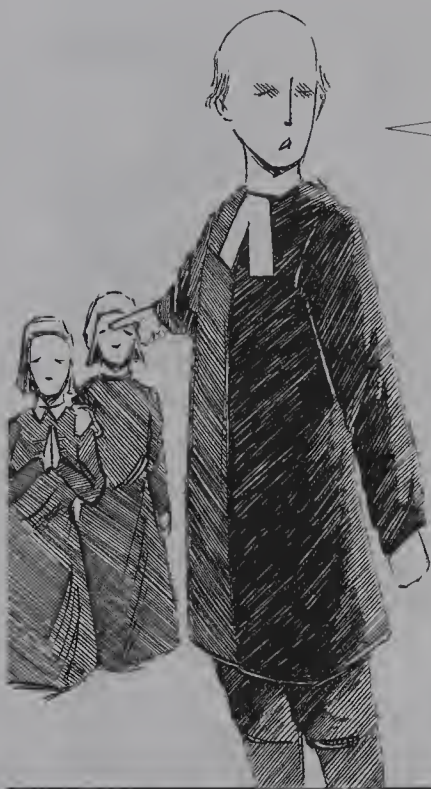






THE EXAMINATION OF REBECCA NURSE SALEM VILLAGE, 1692





Goody Nurse, here are two children who say **your apparition** is hurting them. What say you to this?



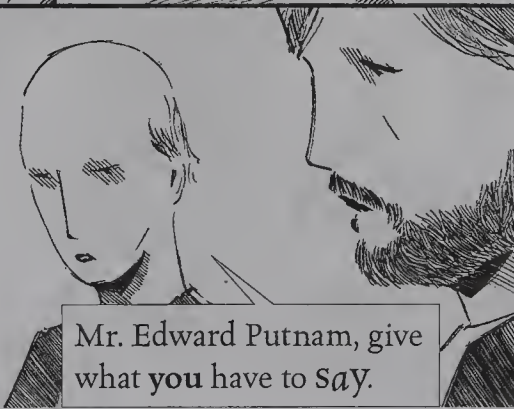
I can say before my eternal Father, I am **innocent**. **God** will see my innocence.



Here is the wife of Mr. Thomas Putnam, who **accuseth** you by credible information, both of **tempting** her with **iniquity** and of **hurting** her.



I am **innocent** and clear.



Mr. Edward Putnam, give what **you** have to **Say**.

Is this true,
Goody Nurse?



I never afflicted
no child in my life.



You see they who accuse you; is it true?

NO.



DID YOU NOT
BID ME TEMPT
GOD AND DIE??



HOW OFTEN HAVE YOU
EATEN AND DRUNK
YOUR OWN DEMON?
WHAT DO YOU SAY??

Oh Lord,
help me.



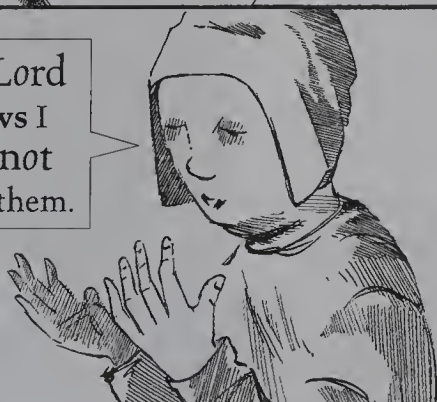
FFF AAA AGGH!!

AAA AGGH!!



Do you not see what a **solemn condition** these girls are in?
When your **hands** are **loose**,
they are afflicted. What say you?

The Lord
knows I
have not
hurt them.



I am an
innocent
person.



It is very **awful** to see these agonies
and yet, to see you **standing there**
with **dry eyes** when so many are wet.

You do not **know** my **heart**.

You would **do well**, if you
are **guilty**, to **confess**.

I am as **clear** as the ...





... child unborn.



I pray God clear you if you be **innocent** and if **guilty**, discover you. Give me an upright answer: Have you **familiarity** with **spirits**?



No, I have **none** but with **God** alone.



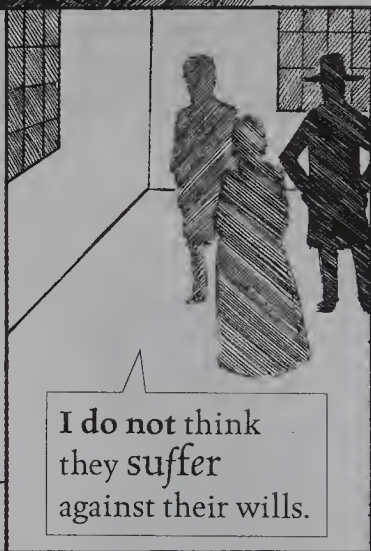
Do you think these girls suffer
voluntarily or involuntarily?

I cannot tell what
to think of it.



Well, then, give
an answer: Do you
think they suffer
against their wills?

Why do you
never visit these
afflicted persons?



I do not think
they suffer
against their wills.



Is it not an
unaccountable case
that when **you** are
examined, these
persons are afflicted?



I was afraid
I should have
fits too.



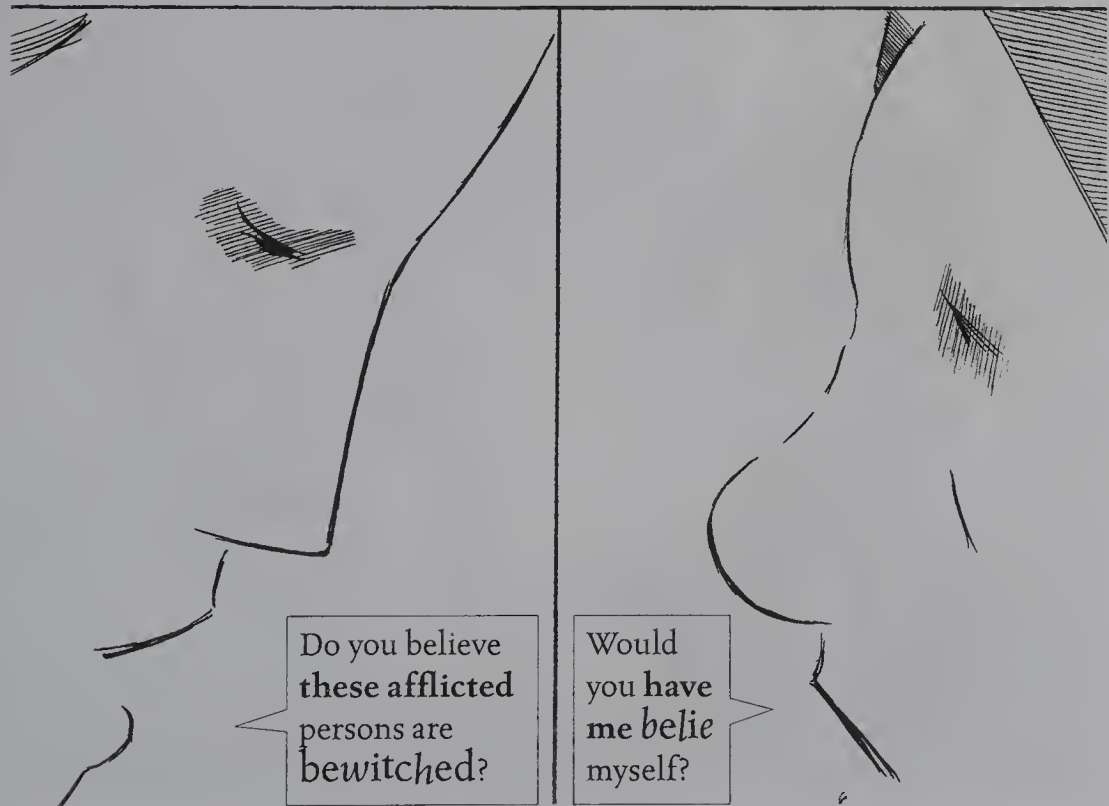
I have **nobody** to
look to but **God**.



AAAGH!!



EEEEEE!!
EEEEEE!!

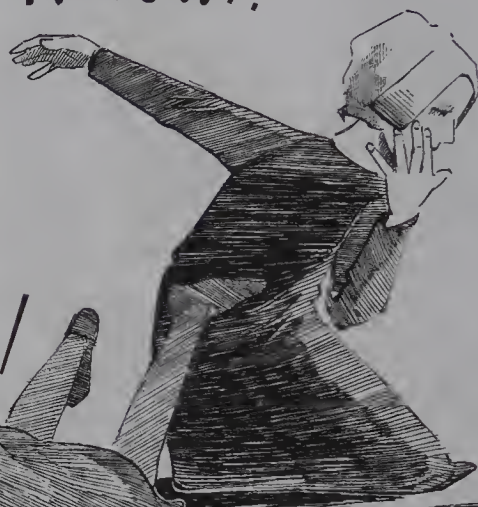


Do you believe
these afflicted
persons are
bewitched?

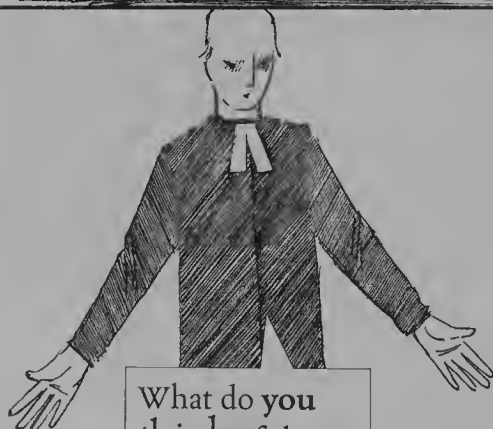
Would
you **have**
me belie
myself?



AAAGH!! AAA!!



EEEEEE!!



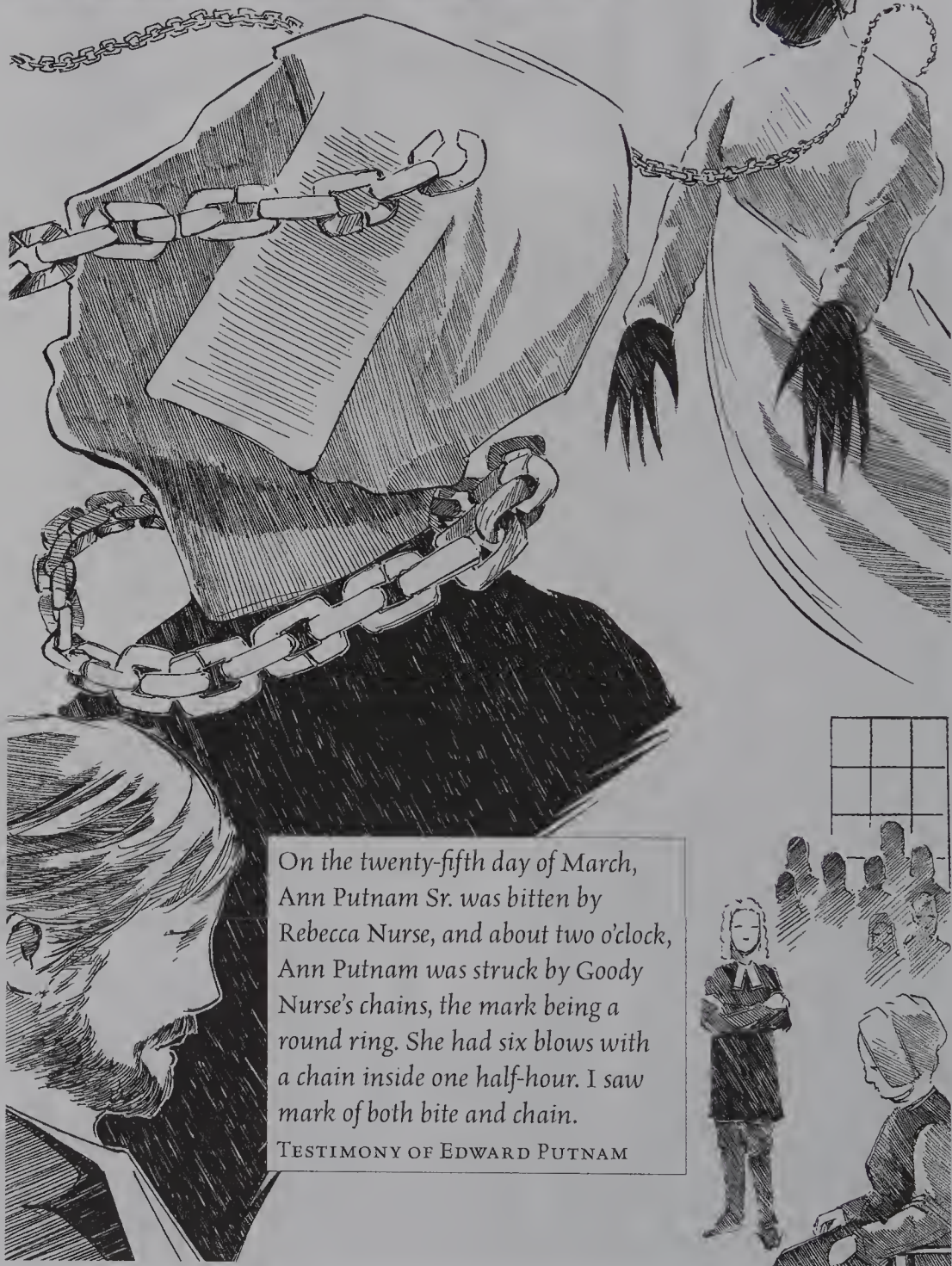
What do you
think of this?




I cannot help it; the Devil
may appear in my shape.



THE TRIAL OF REBECCA NURSE SALEM VILLAGE, 1692

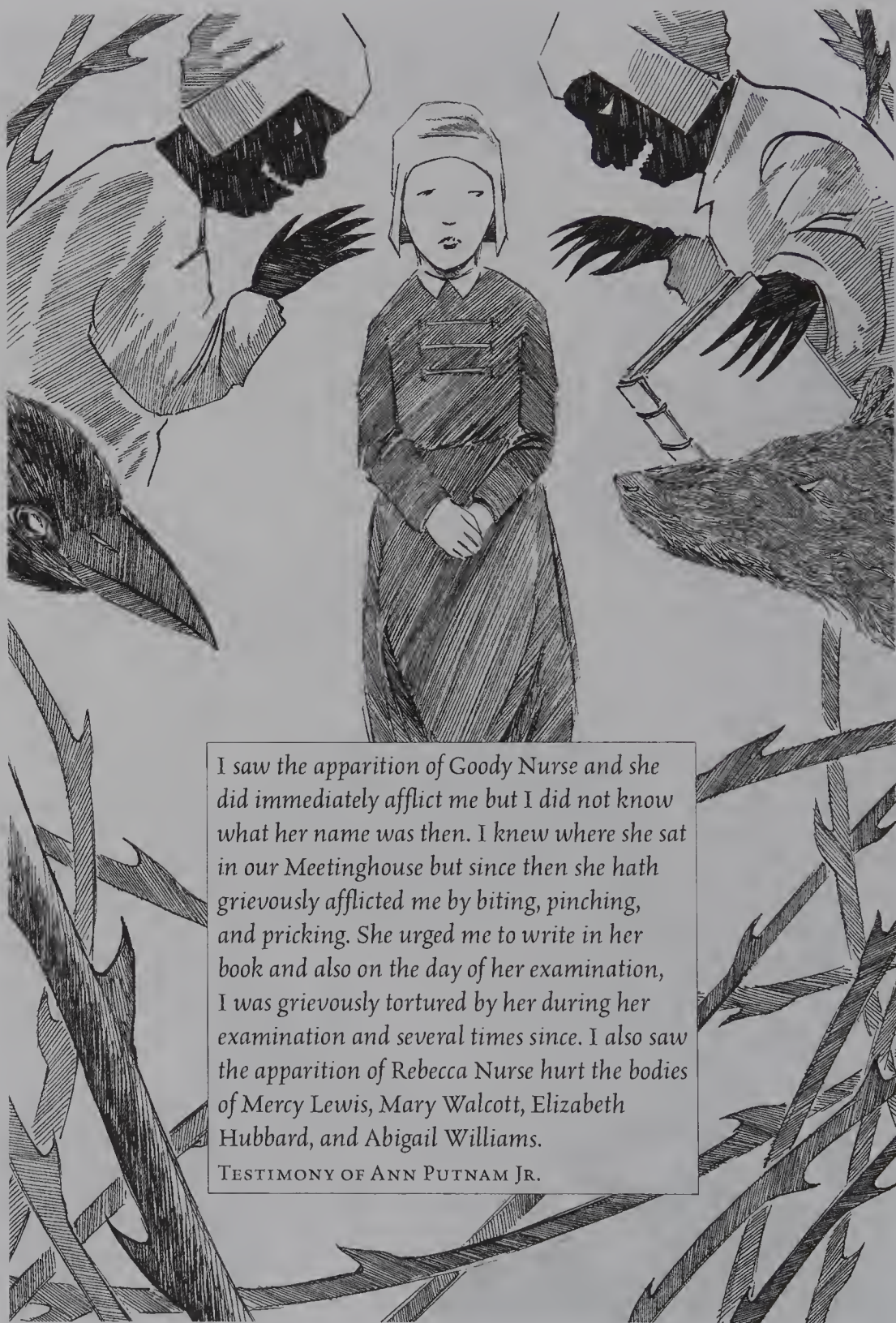




On the first day of June, the apparition of Rebecca Nurse did fall on me and almost choke me and she did tell me that she was come out of prison and would follow me and would kill me if she could. She told me her sister, Goody Cloyse, and Edward Bishop killed young John Putnam's children, and said they were witches. Also there did appear to me my sister and three of her children in winding sheets and they told me that Goody Nurse had murdered them.

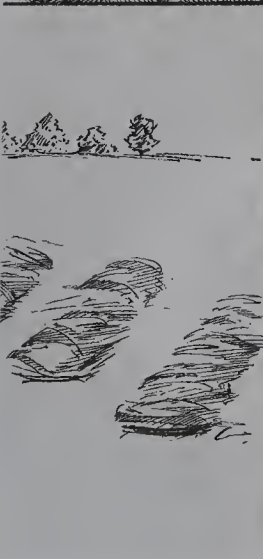
TESTIMONY OF ANN PUTNAM SR.





I saw the apparition of Goody Nurse and she did immediately afflict me but I did not know what her name was then. I knew where she sat in our Meetinghouse but since then she hath grievously afflicted me by biting, pinching, and pricking. She urged me to write in her book and also on the day of her examination, I was grievously tortured by her during her examination and several times since. I also saw the apparition of Rebecca Nurse hurt the bodies of Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard, and Abigail Williams.

TESTIMONY OF ANN PUTNAM JR.



V
THE PUTNAM CHILDREN
1706



Ann



Deliverance



Timothy



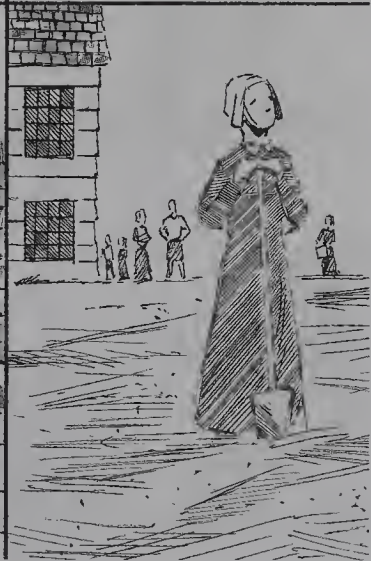
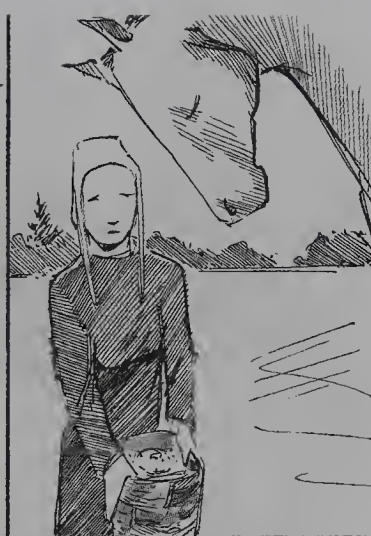
Abigail

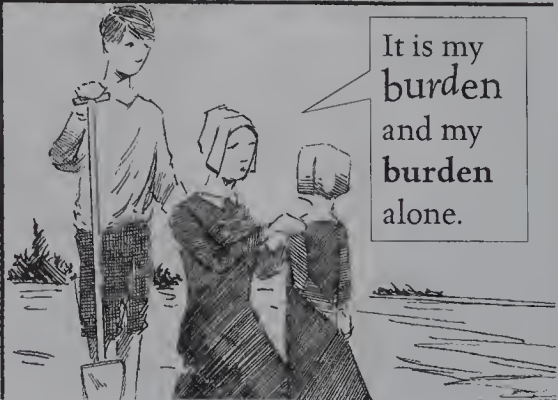
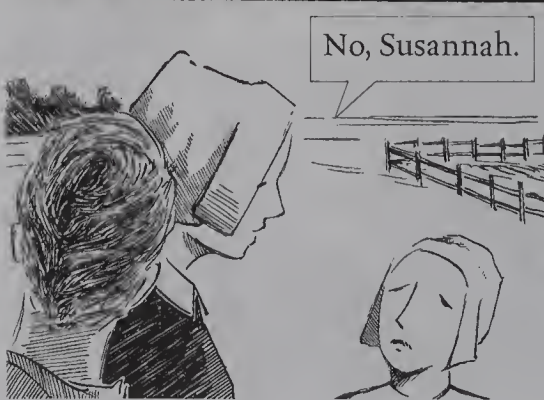
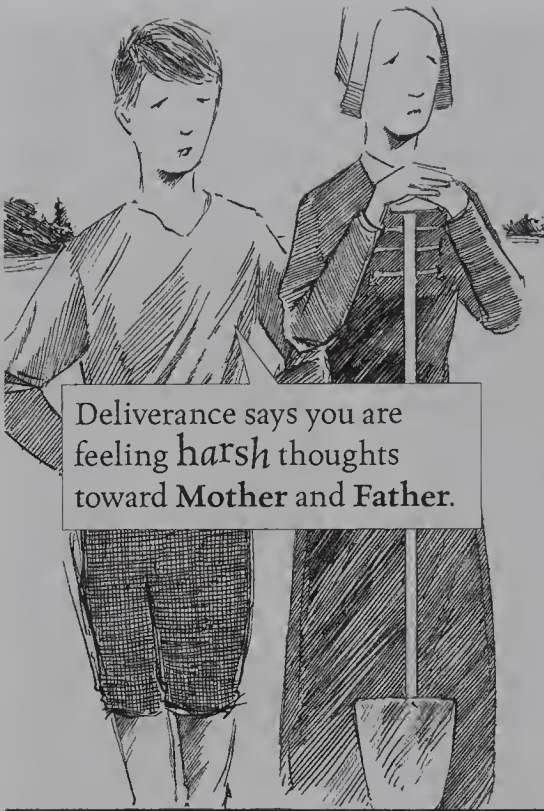


Susannah

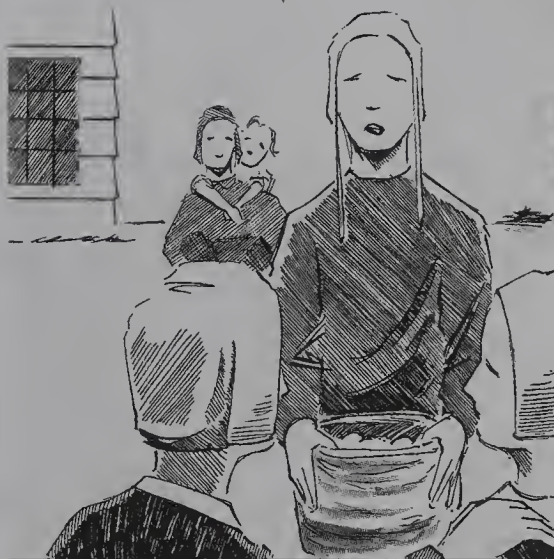


Seth





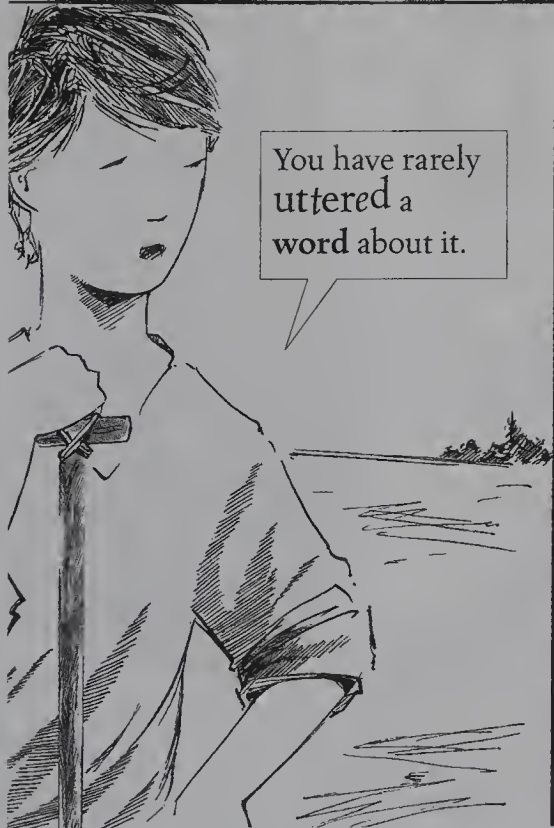
Ann, let us help you. You **alone** have been our mother, and for that we do not want to see you **hurting**.



Please, tell us why you feel this way.



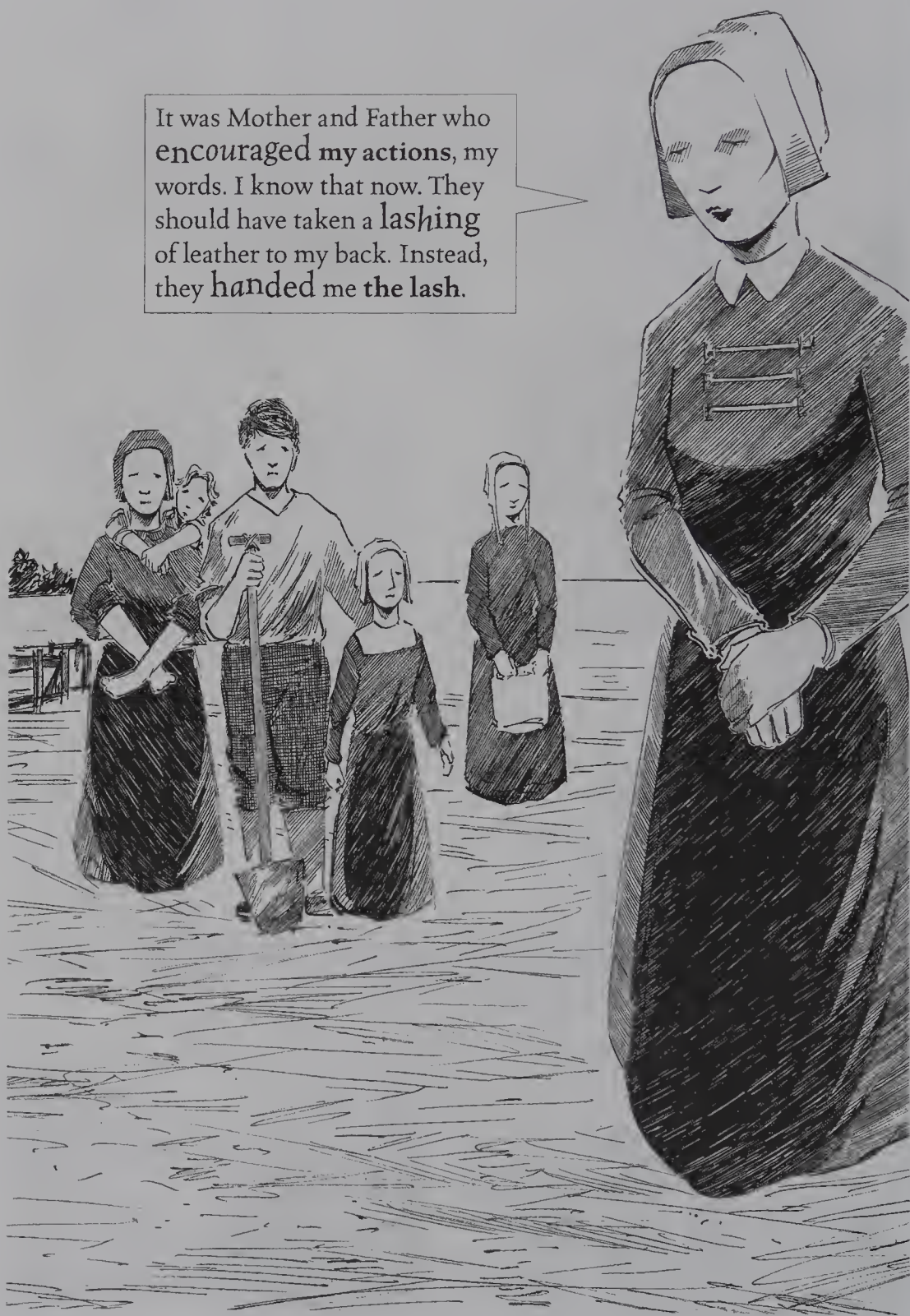
You have rarely uttered a word about it.



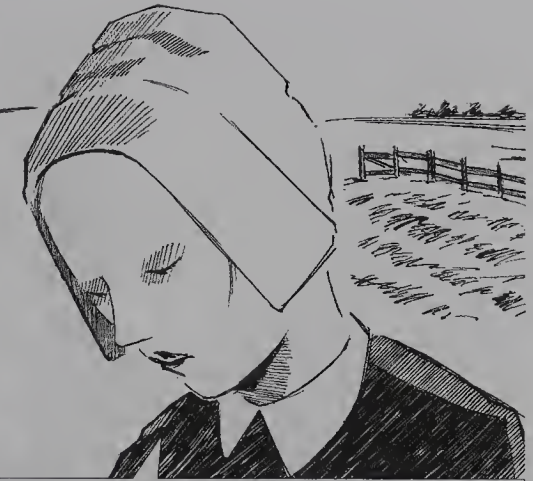
Why are you **angry** with Mother and Father?



It was Mother and Father who encouraged my actions, my words. I know that now. They should have taken a lashing of leather to my back. Instead, they handed me the lash.



What do you mean by this, Ann?



Father and Uncle Edward told me to say things **during those awful** trials. In me, Father found an **instrument** to play his songs of **acquisition**. He **wanted** what others had and he found a way to . . .

. . . to **acquire** what he wanted.

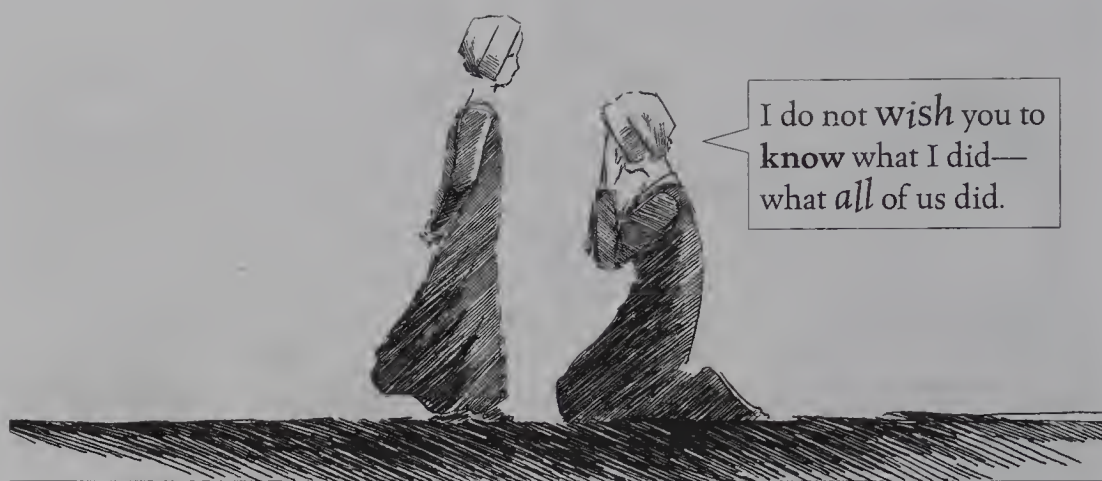


Mother **followed** Father, but her own **fears** and **superstitions** made her words powerful as well.

But Ann, just what were those **trials** all about? Can you tell us what you and the **other girls** of Salem did that was so wrong?



We have all **heard stories**, but **never** from you.



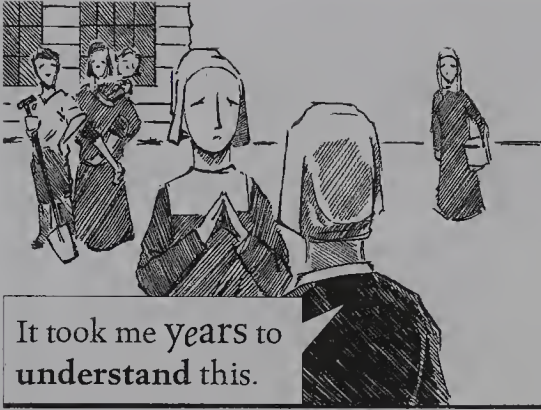
I do not *wish* you to **know** what I did—
what *all* of us did.



You may feel your **weight** lifted if
you just **tell** us about it, Ann. There
is not a soul within the timbers of
this house that would **love** you less.



I do not wish to make you **all feel**
as I do. It would be **good** for you to
cherish the memories of Mother and
Father, and Uncle Edward. But I—I
am **ashamed of them**. I once heard
them speaking in the night about
obtaining the land of those **hanged**,
and how it could **benefit** our family.



It took me **years** to **understand** this.

I did, Seth. Especially when I was a **child** as you are today.



Mother and Father took **great care** of me. But **love** and **respect** do not always go **hand in hand**.



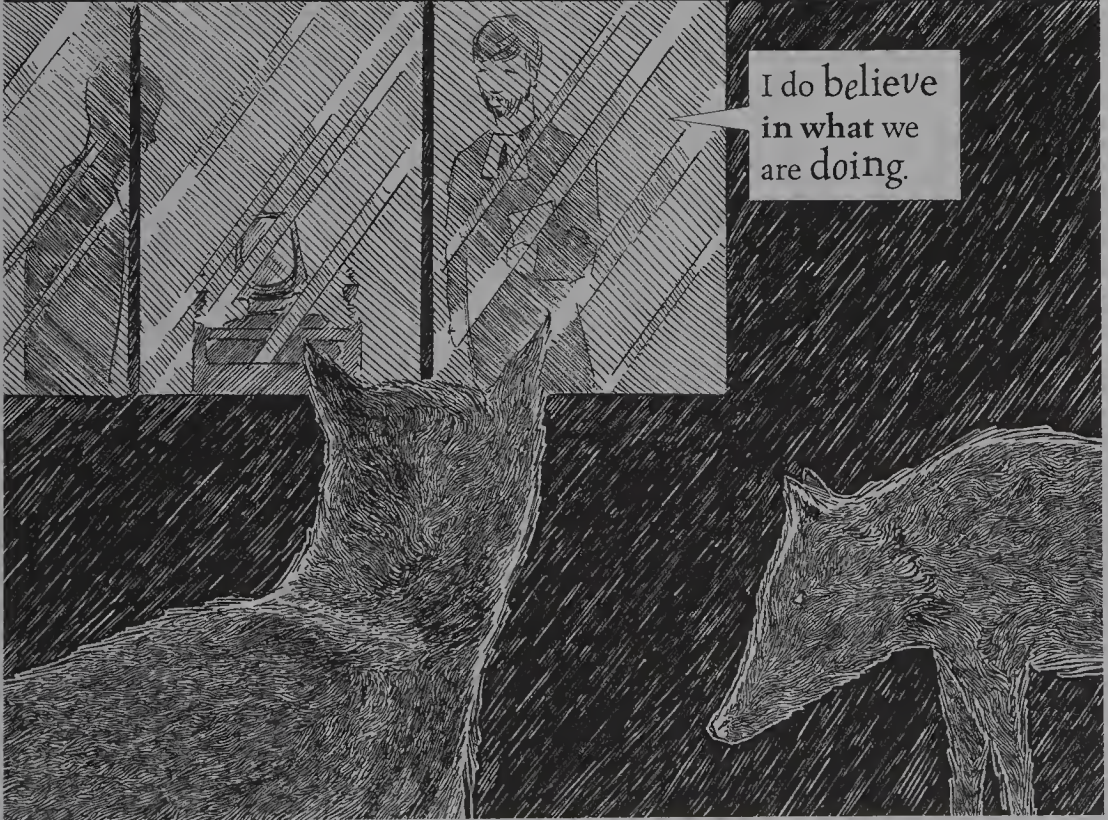
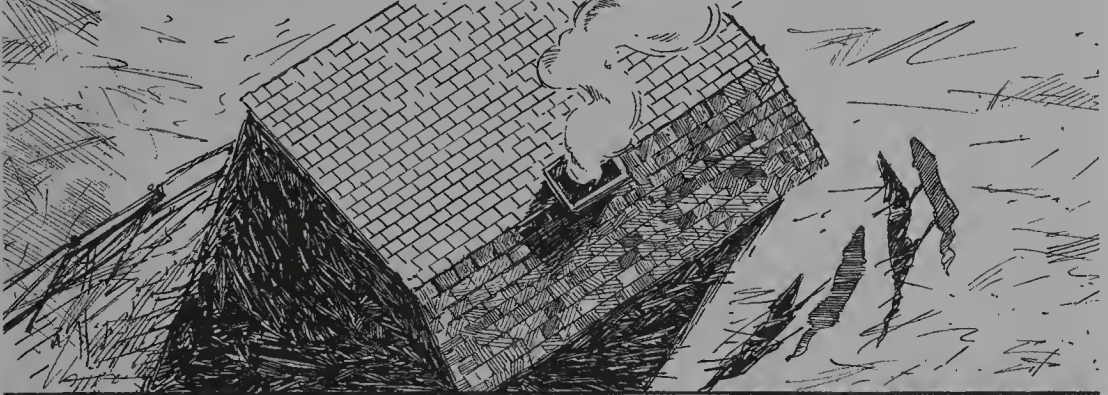
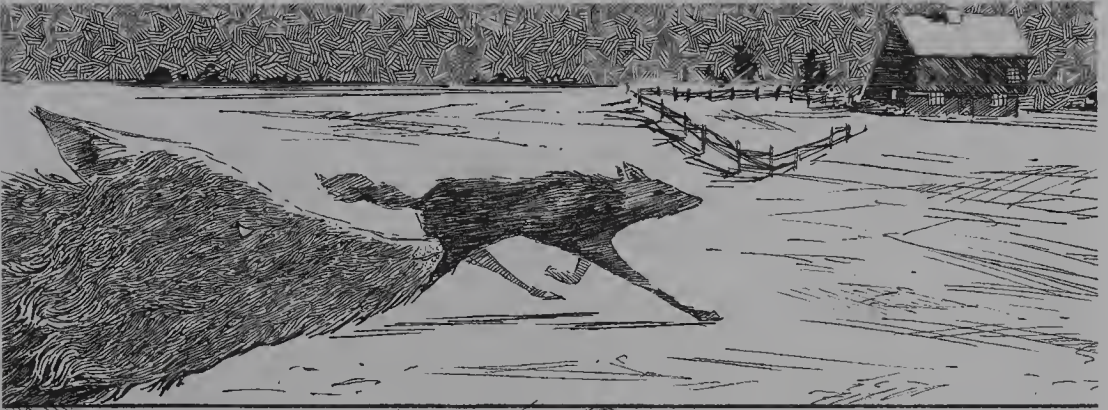
Did you **not love** Mother and Father?



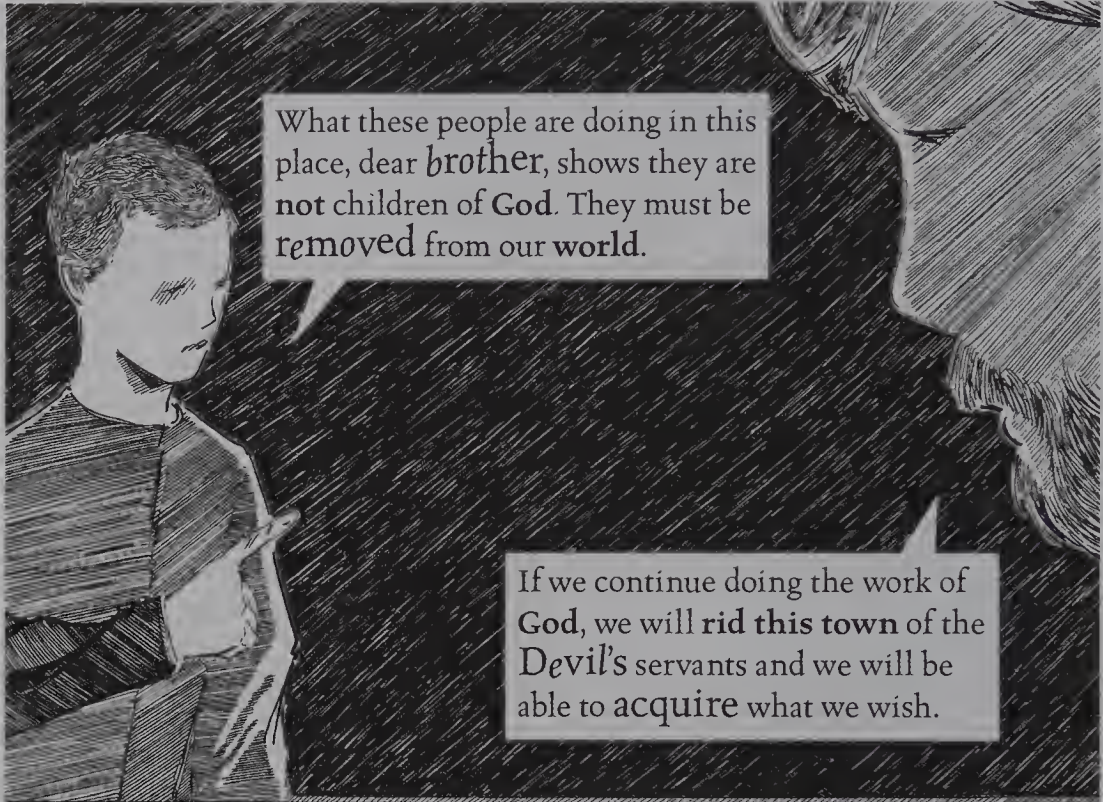
I remember a **story** I once heard about **Martha**, the wife of old Giles Cory. Could you **tell us** about her?



VI
DEALINGS
1692

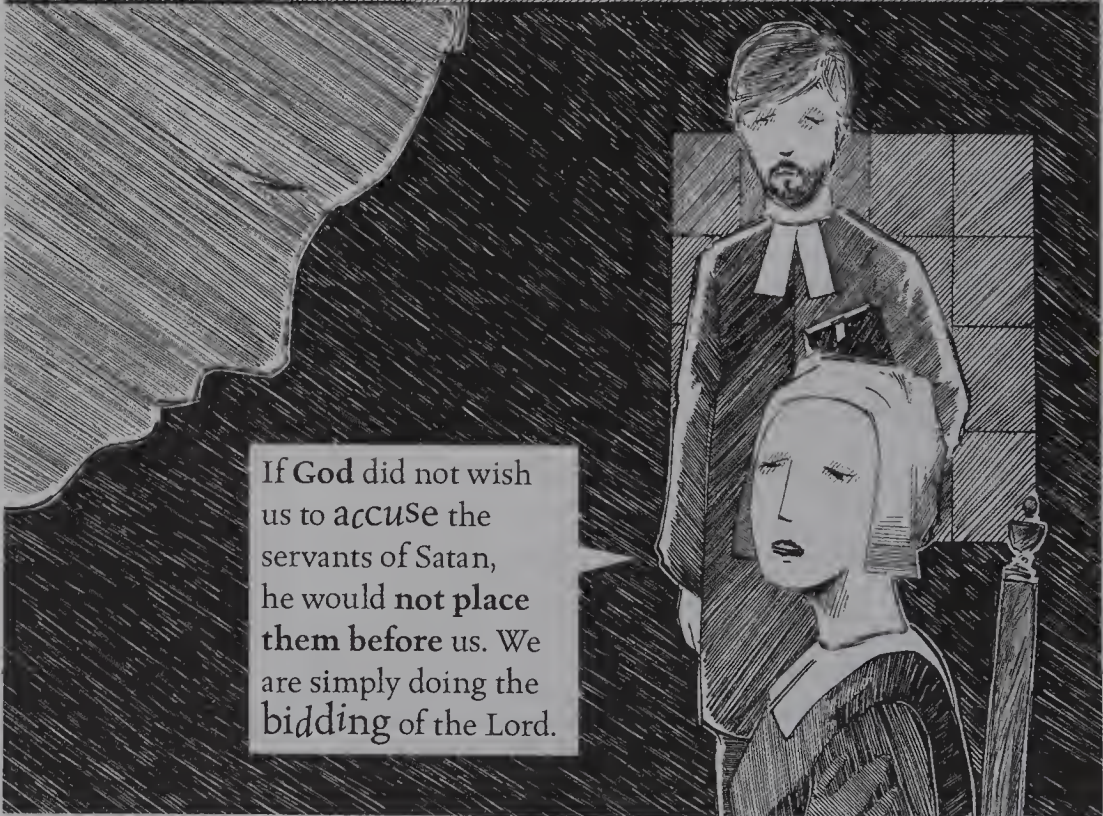


I do believe
in what we
are doing.

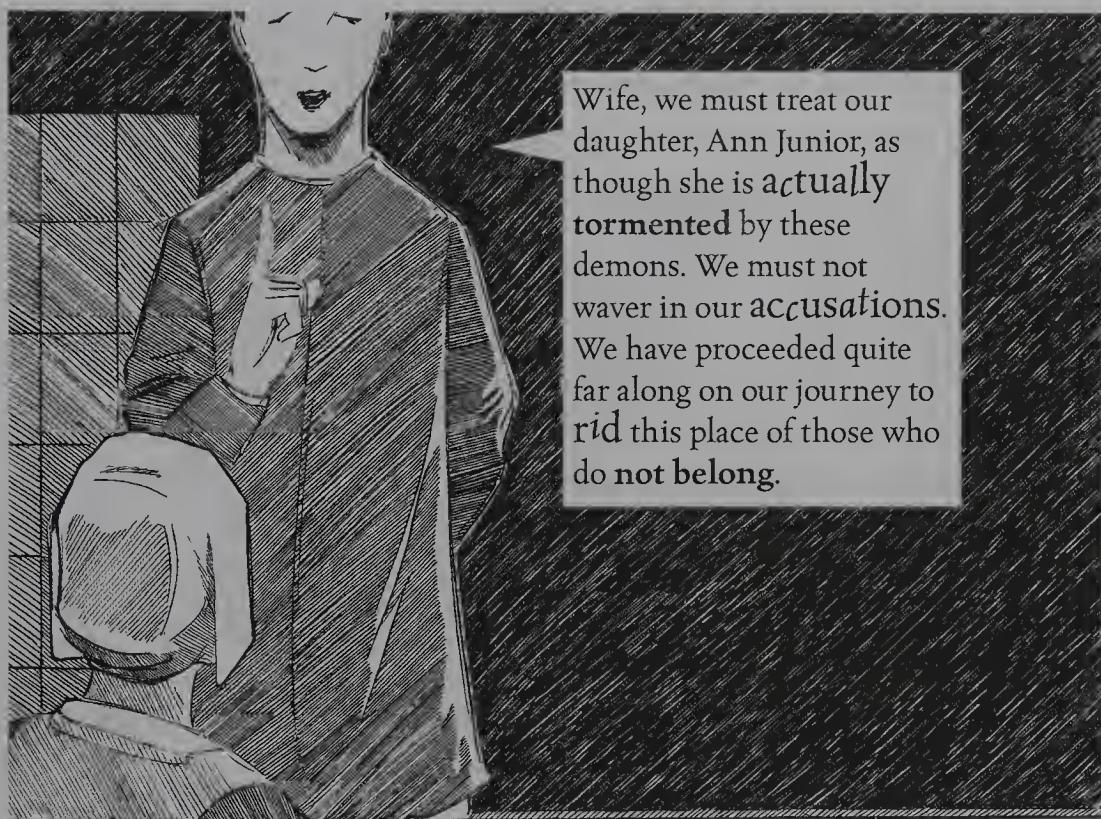


What these people are doing in this place, dear **brother**, shows they are **not** children of **God**. They must be **removed** from our world.

If we continue doing the work of **God**, we will **rid this town** of the **Devil's** servants and we will be able to **acquire** what we wish.

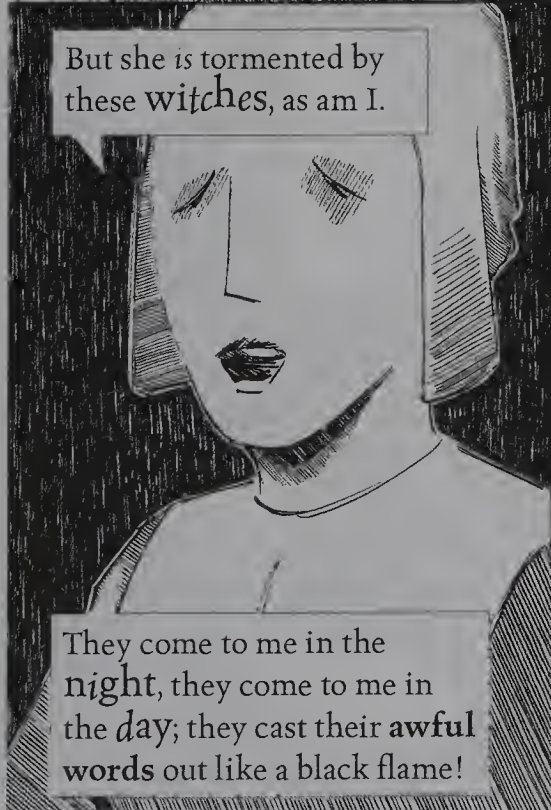


If **God** did not wish us to **accuse** the servants of Satan, he would **not place** **them** before us. We are simply doing the **bidding** of the Lord.

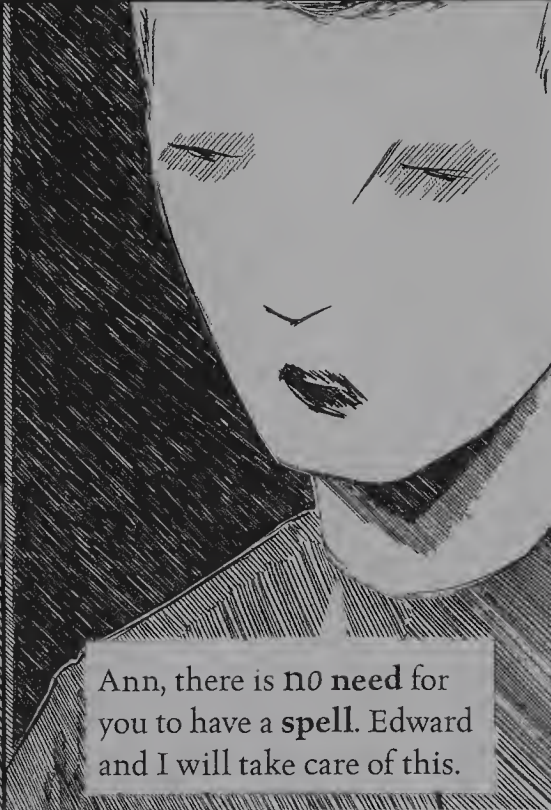


Wife, we must treat our daughter, Ann Junior, as though she is **actually** **tormented** by these demons. We must not waver in our **accusations**. We have proceeded quite far along on our journey to **rid** this place of those who do **not** belong.

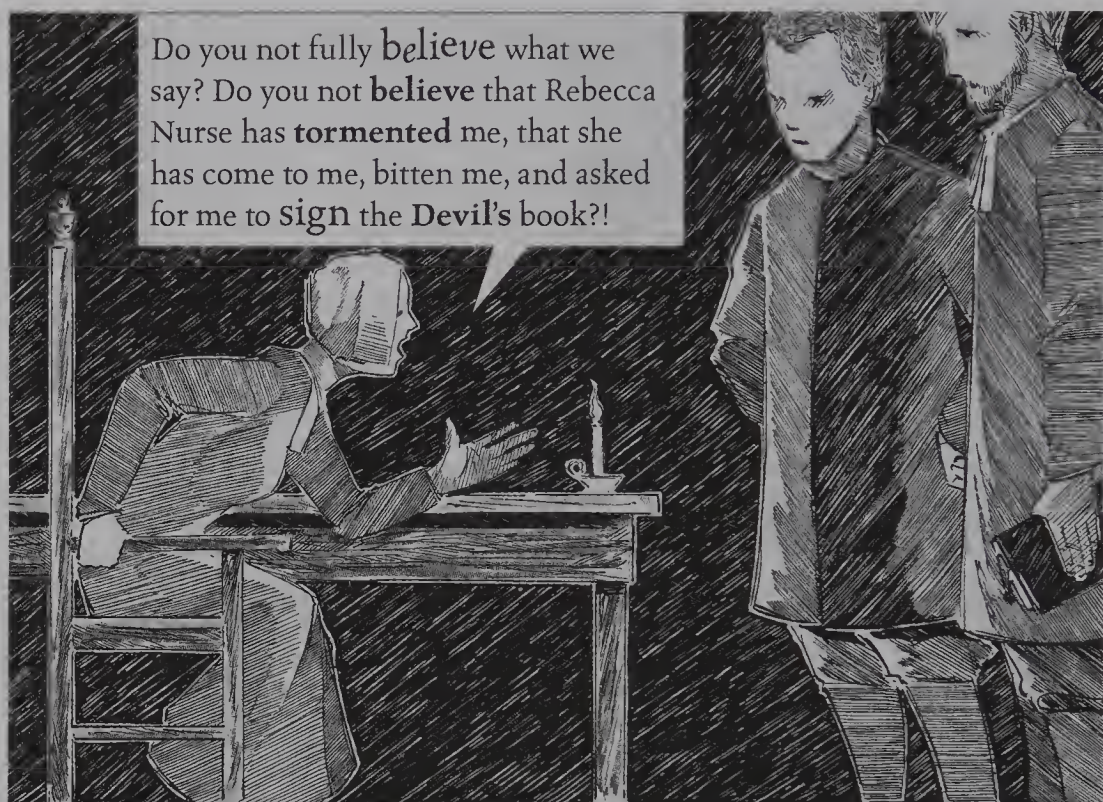
But she is tormented by these **witches**, as am I.



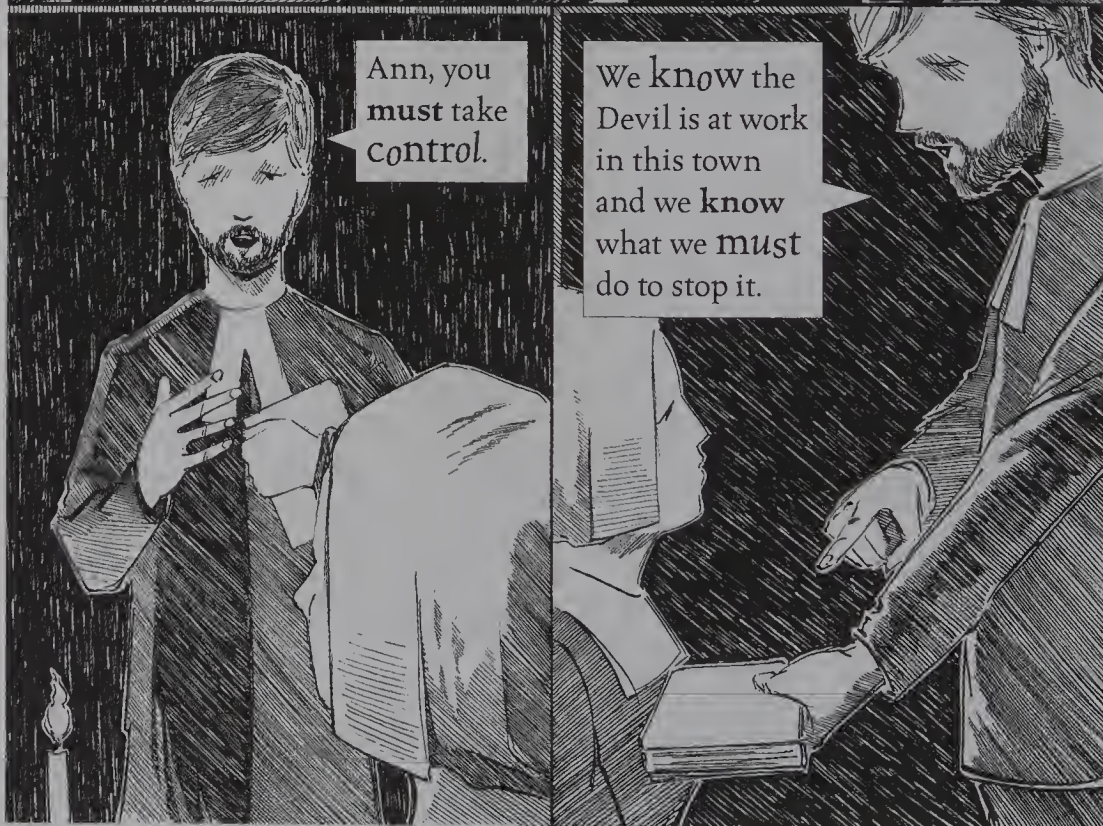
They come to me in the **night**, they come to me in the **day**; they cast their **awful** **words** out like a black flame!



Ann, there is **no** need for you to have a **spell**. Edward and I will take care of this.



Do you not fully **believe** what we say? Do you not **believe** that Rebecca Nurse has **tormented** me, that she has come to me, bitten me, and asked for me to **sign** the Devil's book?!

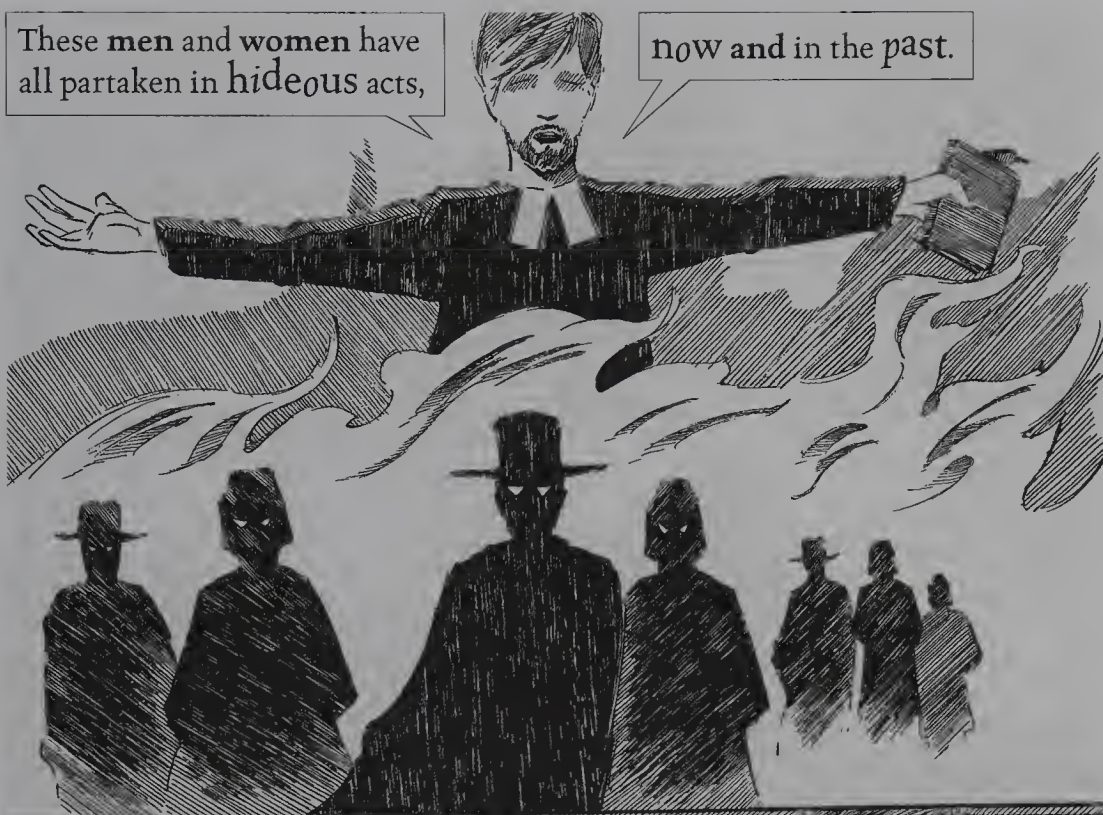


Ann, you **must** take **control**.

We **know** the Devil is at work in this town and we **know** what we **must** do to stop it.

These **men** and **women** have
all partaken in **hideous** acts,

now and in the past.

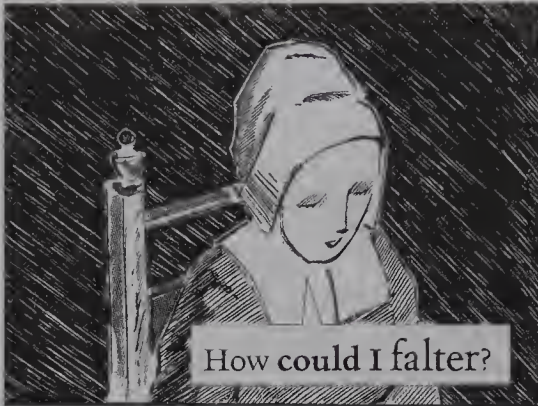


We must use
whatever **power**
we have, whether
it be the **power** of
spectacle or the
power of truth.



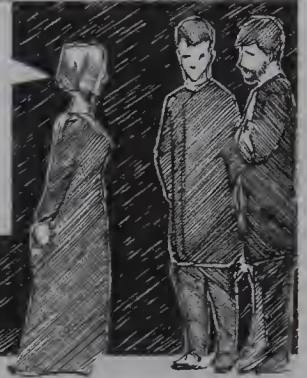
We must **stand together**
as a field of stones and not
falter on our words.



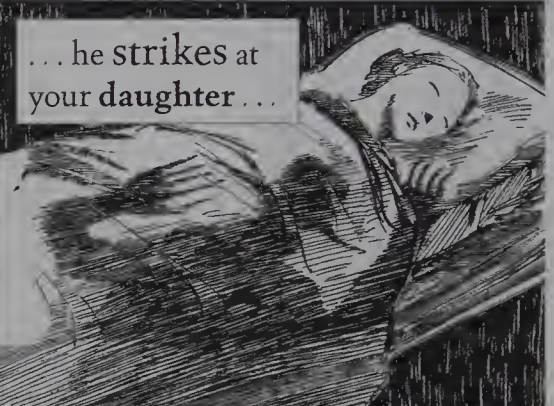


How could I falter?

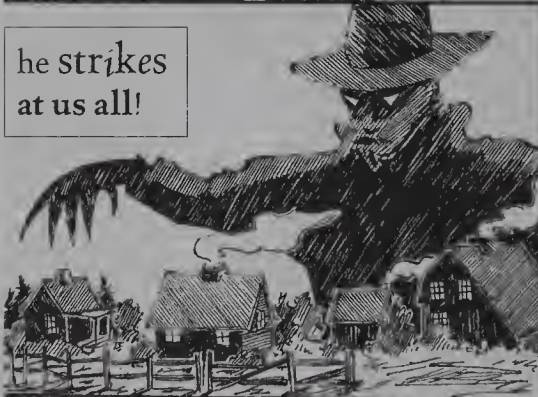
How could I not stand by my words, for they are the words of truth!



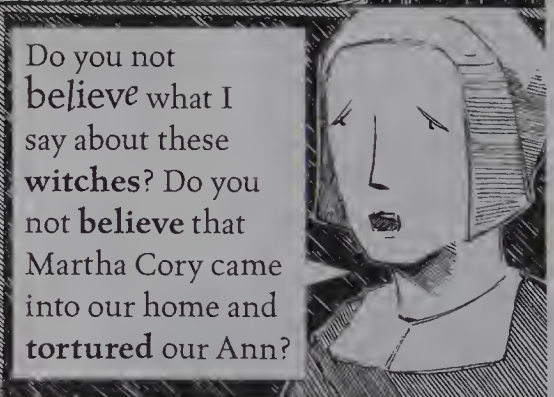
The Devil has taken reign over our village and he strikes at me ...



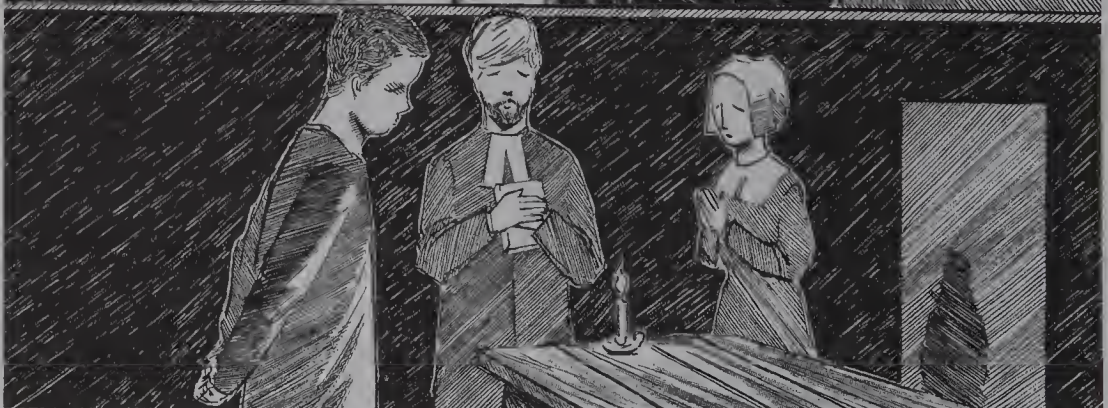
... he strikes at your daughter ...




he strikes at us all!



Do you not believe what I say about these witches? Do you not believe that Martha Cory came into our home and tortured our Ann?





Then we
must,
finger by
finger,
cause the
Devil to
release
his grip
on Salem.

VII
MARTHA
1692







The deposition of Edward Putnam, aged thirty-eight years, testifieth and sayeth:



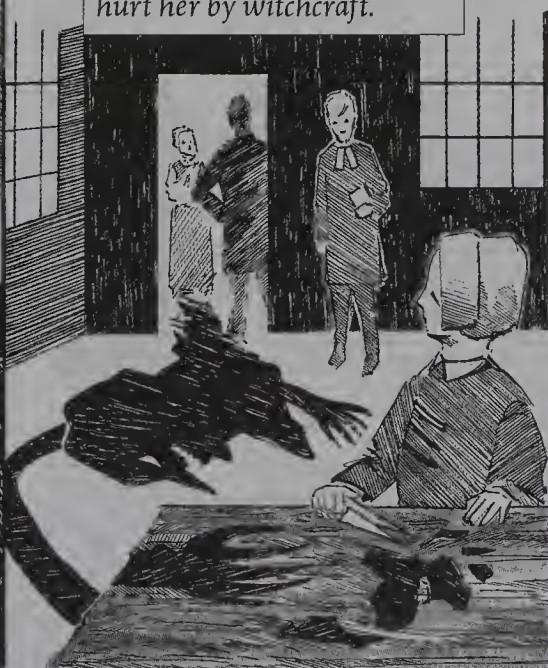
On the fourteenth day of March, 1692, Martha Cory, the wife of Giles Cory, came to the house of Thomas Putnam.



She desired to come inside and see his daughter, Ann Putnam Jr. . . .



. . . who had charged Martha Cory to her face that she had hurt her by witchcraft.



No sooner did Martha Cory come into the house but Ann Putnam fell into grievous fits of choking and blinding . . .



. . . her feet and hands twisting in a most grievous manner.



She told Martha Cory to her face that she did it, and immediately her tongue was . . .



. . . drawn out of her mouth and her teeth fastened upon it in a most grievous manner.



After Ann Putnam had liberty to speak, she said to Martha Cory, "There is a yellow bird . . .



. . . sucking between your forefinger and middle finger. I will come and see it."

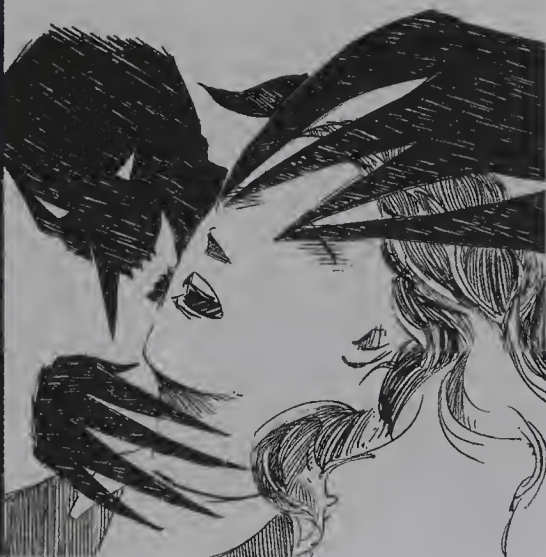
"So you may," replied Martha.



But before Ann came to her, I saw Martha put one of her fingers in the place where Ann said she saw the bird and seemed to give a hard rub.



When Ann was close to her, she fell down blinded and could not move any more.



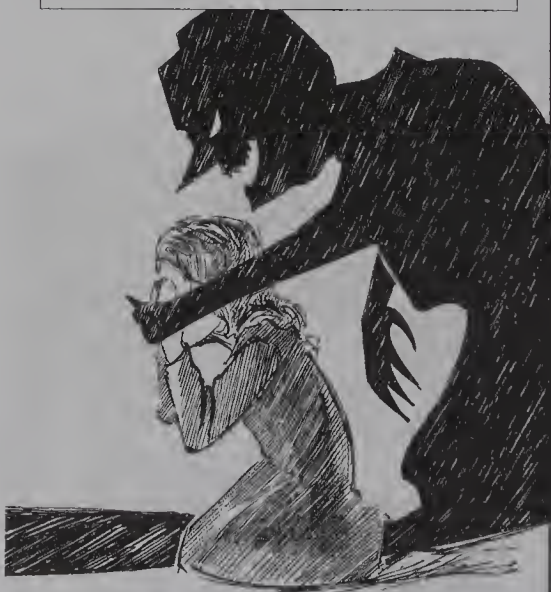
Ann Putnam also told that Martha Cory put her hands on the face of Joseph Pope's wife, one Sabbath Day at meeting.



Showing her how she did it . . .



. . . immediately her hands were fastened to her eyes that they could not be pulled from them . . .



. . . except they should be broken off.



I have also seen many bites
before and since upon our
afflicted persons who have told
me Martha Cory did it.



She is the prisoner now at the bar.



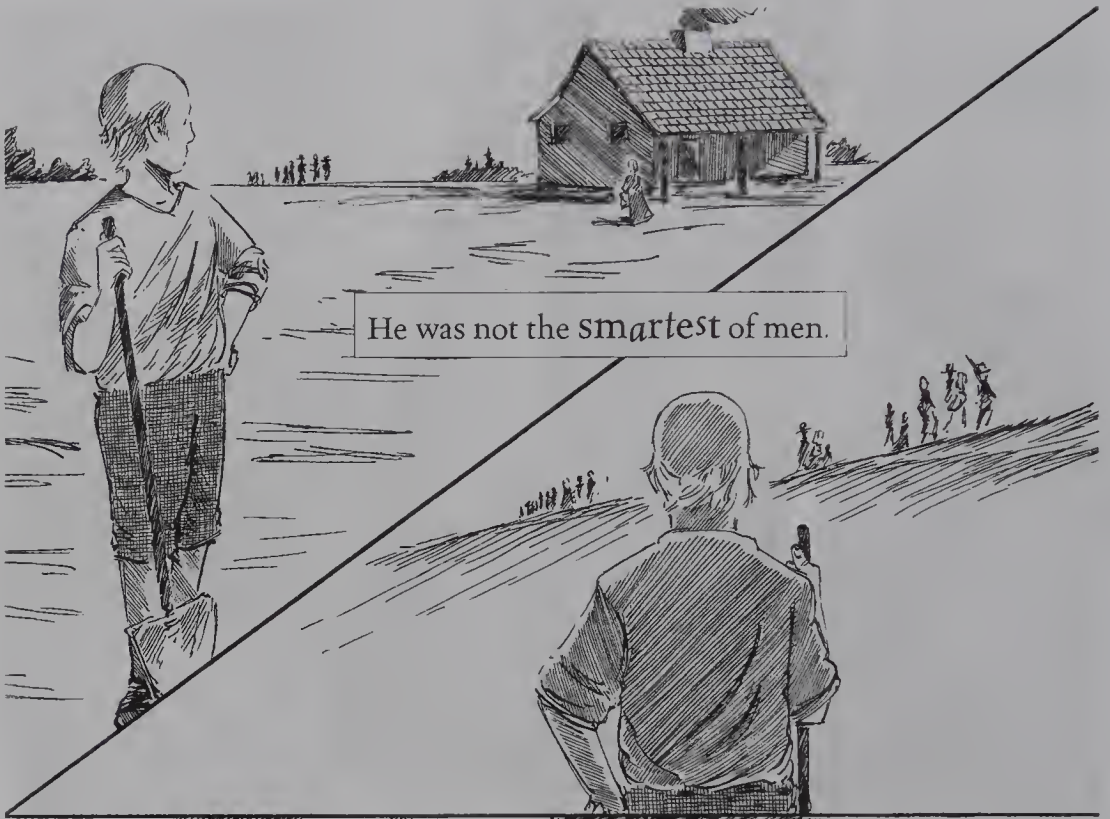
VIII
RECALLING GILES CORY
1706





In the early morning hours of a normal September day in Salem Village, the life was crushed out of a man. Giles Cory was too stubborn to allow simple girls, who claimed affliction by the possession of witches, determine his life.





He was not the *smartest* of men.

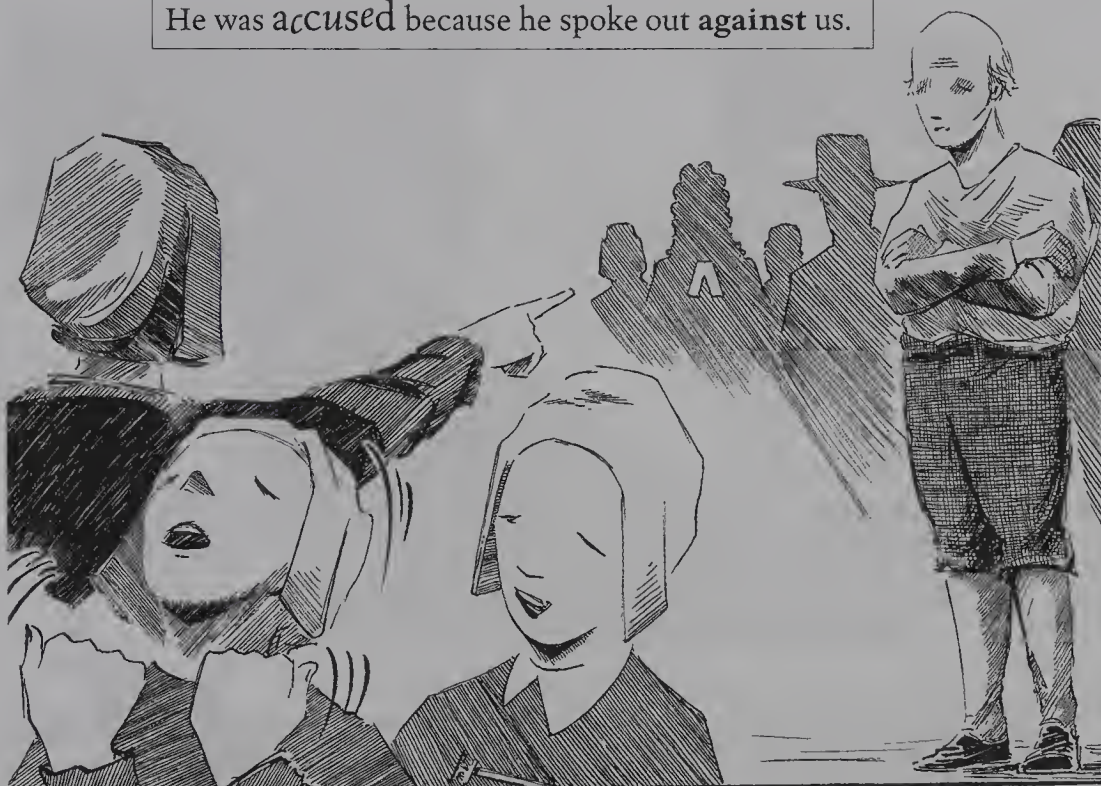


But he *saw* that *hysteria* was brewing

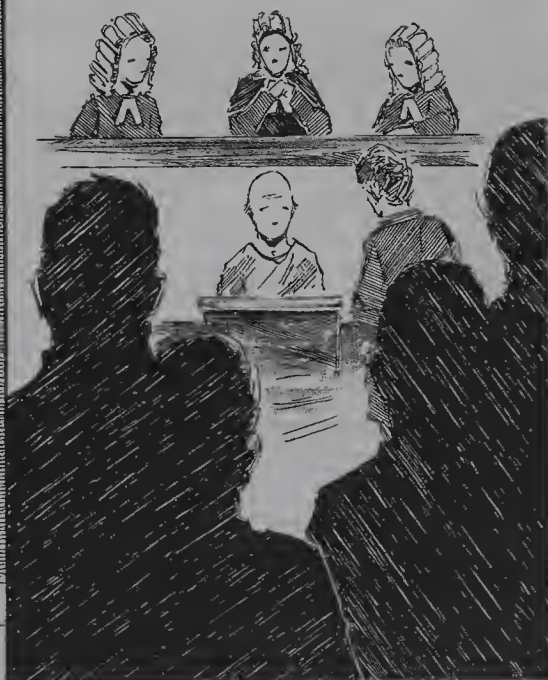
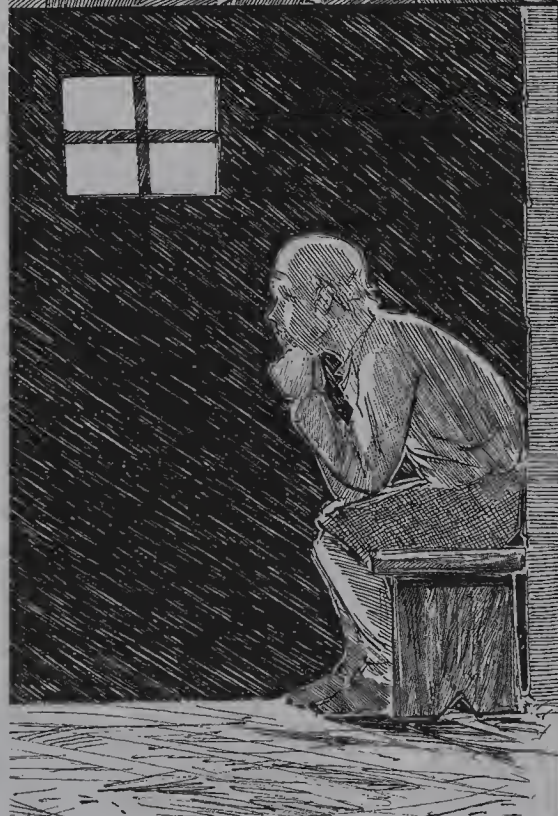


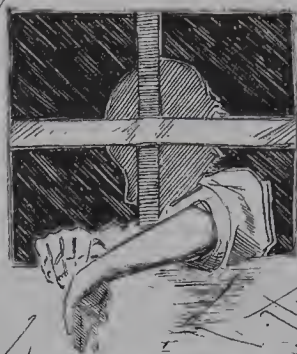
and was about to *bubble* over.

He was *accused* because he spoke out *against* us.



He *denied* all wrongdoing.





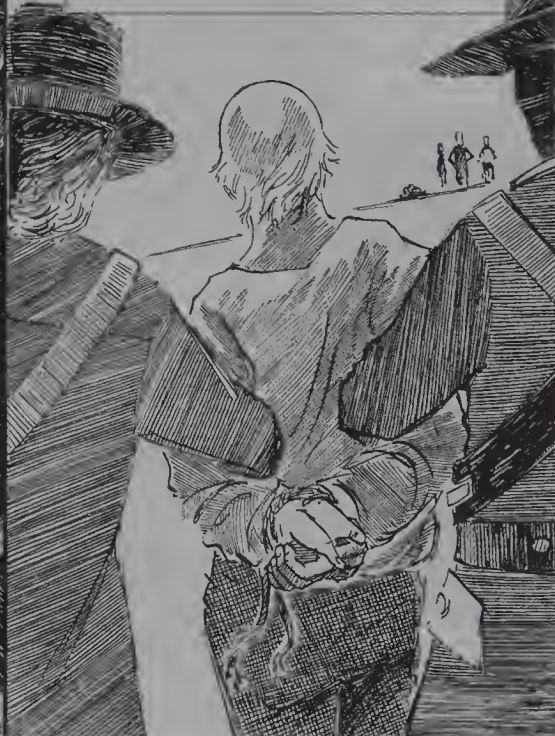
He remained
silent, with steel
in his spine like
no other could
under the weight.

Old Giles, eighty years old and eighty years stubborn.

Nobody would take
his soul from him ...



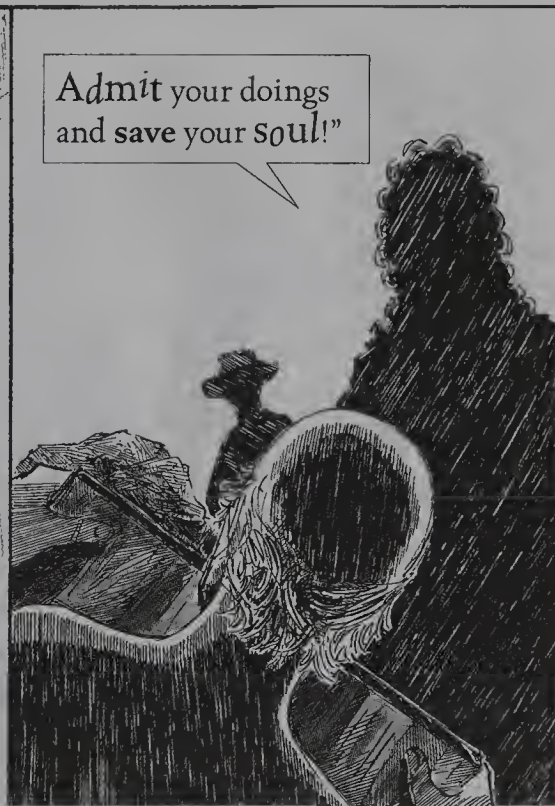
... but we would take his life.



Those morning hours were spent with the magistrates
by his side, and **countless stones** upon his chest.



"Tell us, Cory. You
are a **witch!** You
have **signed** the
Devil's book!"



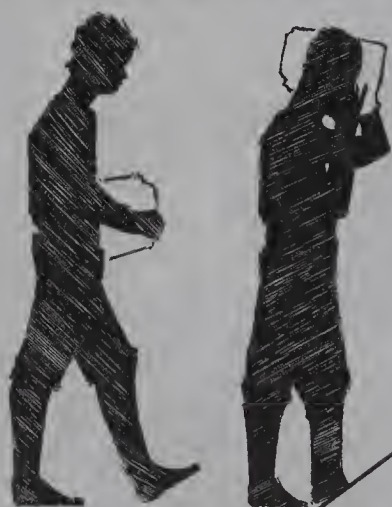
Admit your doings
and save your **soul!**"



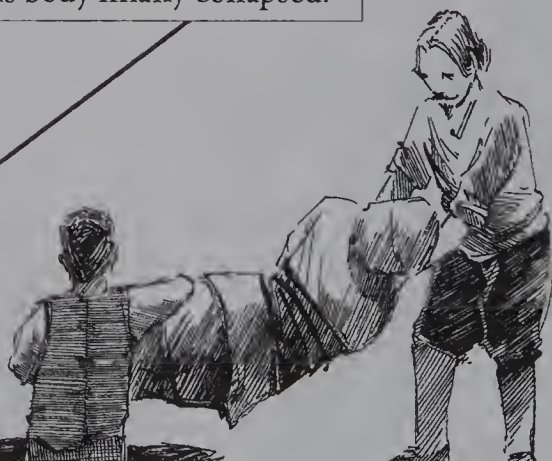
To which the **old man** would reply,
"More **weight**."



More **weight** . . . these words.
These words became the **final words** he uttered. The pressure was so great that his **tongue** had to be forced back into his mouth using the **cane** of one of the magistrates.



But still, "More **weight**."
And because of what we did and the **refusal** of a man to be made **false** in the eyes of **God** and man, his body finally collapsed.



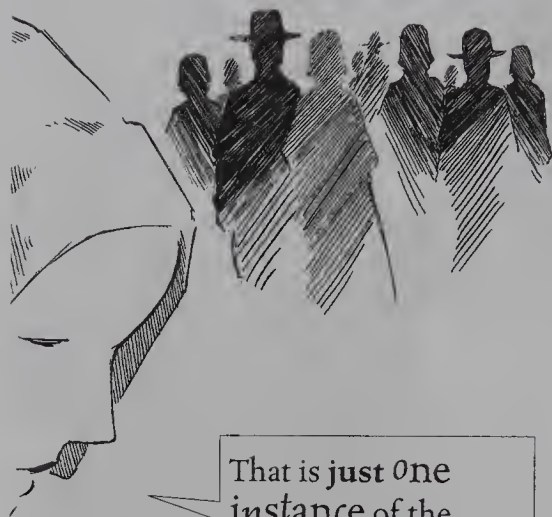
"More **weight**" indeed. And now **another** lay **dead** because of us.

At the time, my mind was **clear** because **I knew he would die**. We were used to causing death. But it is like any decision made by a **child**. When you throw a pebble into even the **smallest** of rain puddles, it **forever** changes the constitution of that body of **water**.



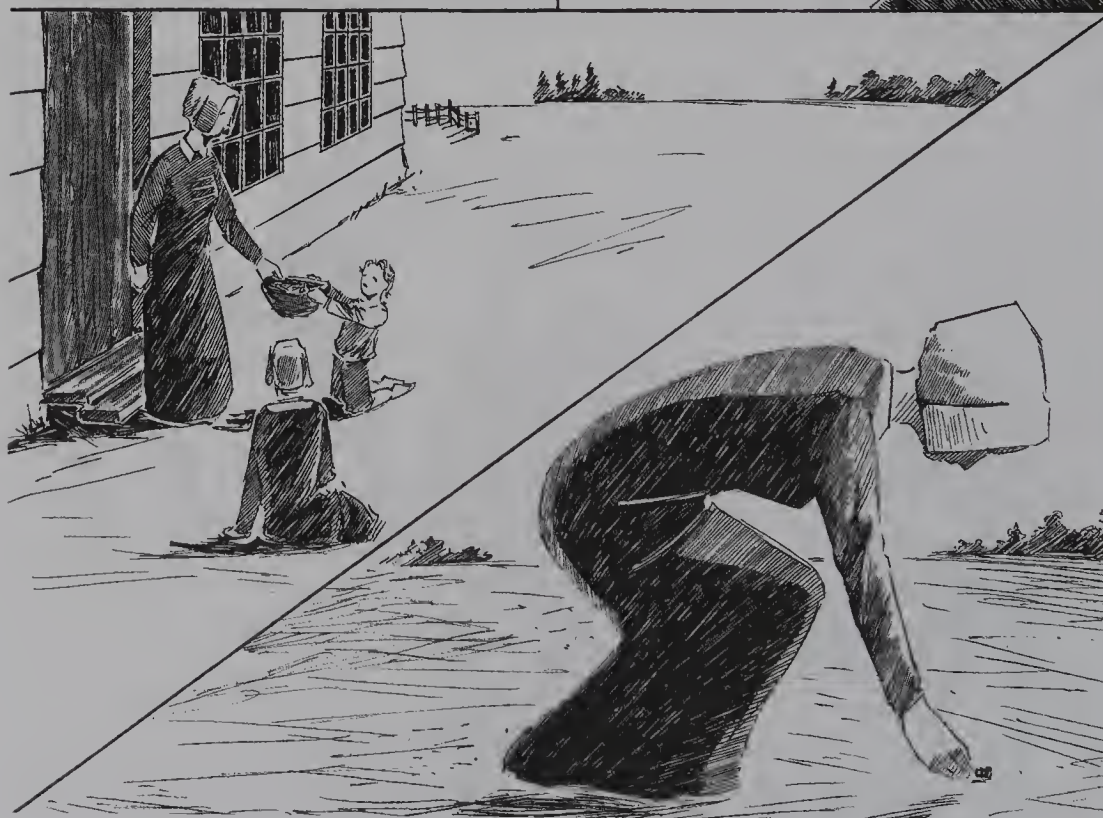
This has **forever** **changed** my **constitution** as a person of **God**. I do not feel pity for **myself** and nor do I ask others to, as I still have **breath** in my lungs, though I am not that **girl** I once was. I am almost a **different** **person** **entirely**.

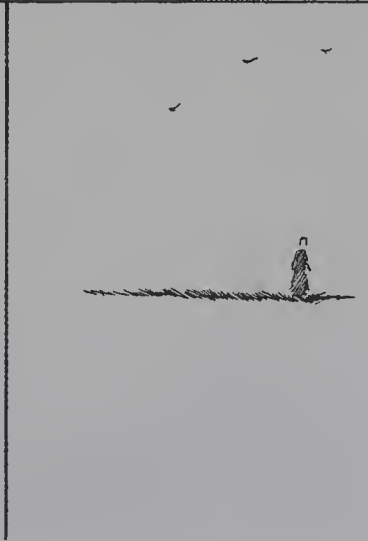
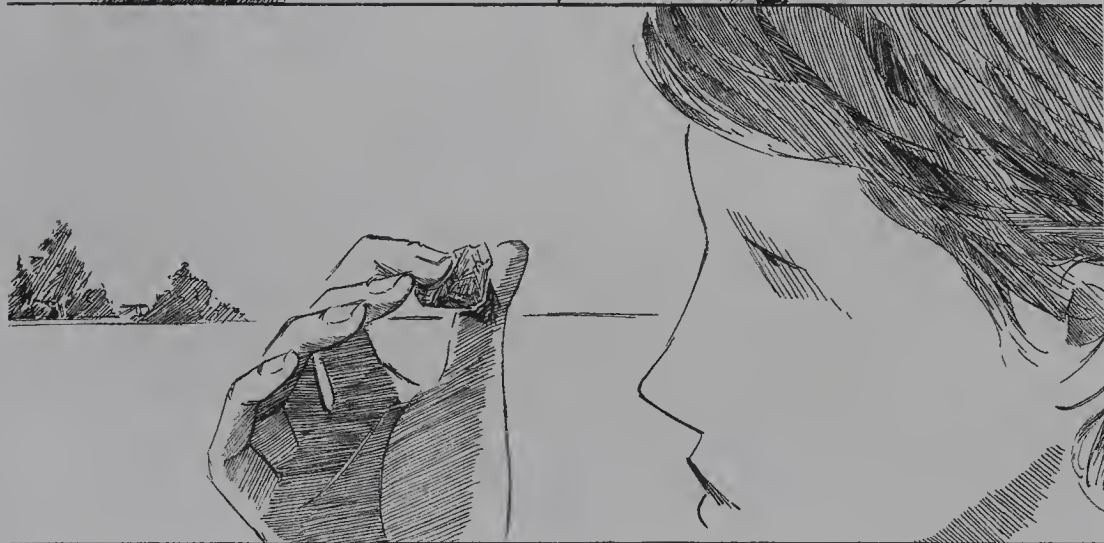


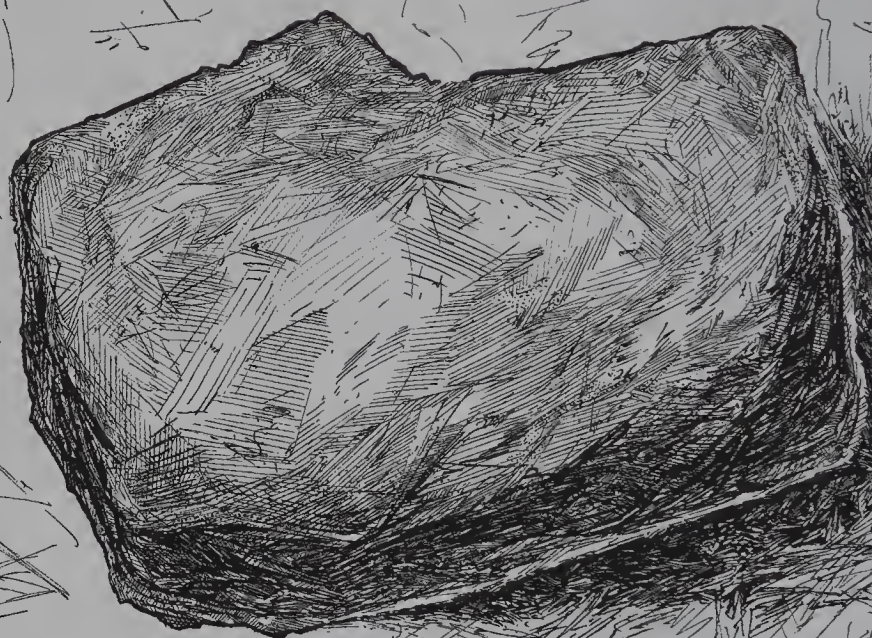


That is **just one**
instance of the
deaths we caused.
His was just a **single**
story among many,
in an **awful** volume.

Keep going, Ann.







IX
GILES
1692



THE DEPOSITION OF ANN PUTNAM JR., APRIL 13TH, 1692

I saw the apparition of Giles Cory come and afflict me and he continued hurting me until the nineteenth, the day of his examination. And during the time of his examination, Giles did torture me a great many times and also several times since then.

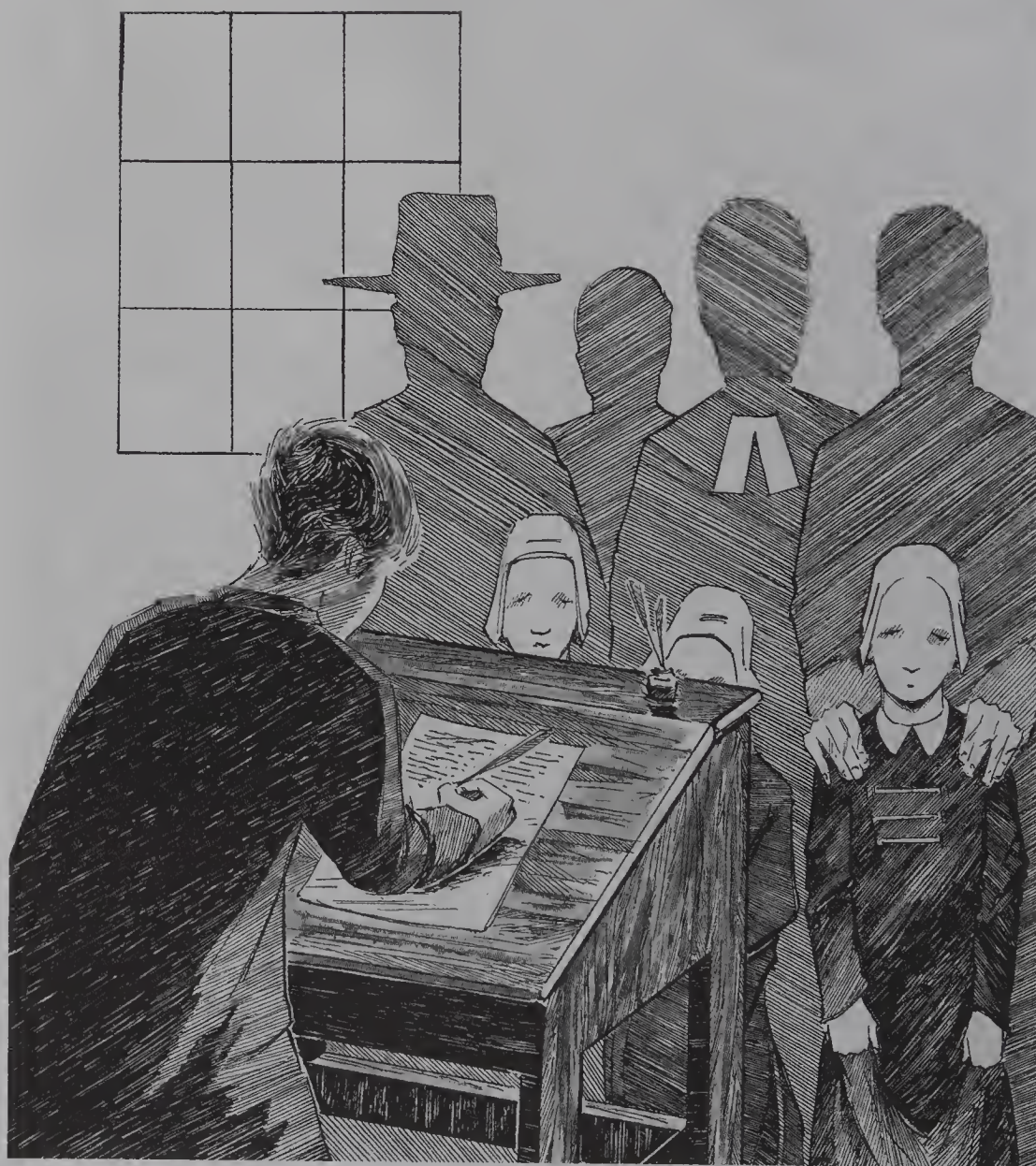




His appearance has most grievously afflicted me by beating, pinching, and almost choking me to death. Also, on the day of his examination, I saw Giles Cory or his appearance most grievously afflict and torment Mary Walcott, Mercy Lewis, and Sarah Bibber. I verily believe that Giles Cory is a dreadful wizard, for since he has been in prison, he or his appearance has come to me a great many times and afflicted me.

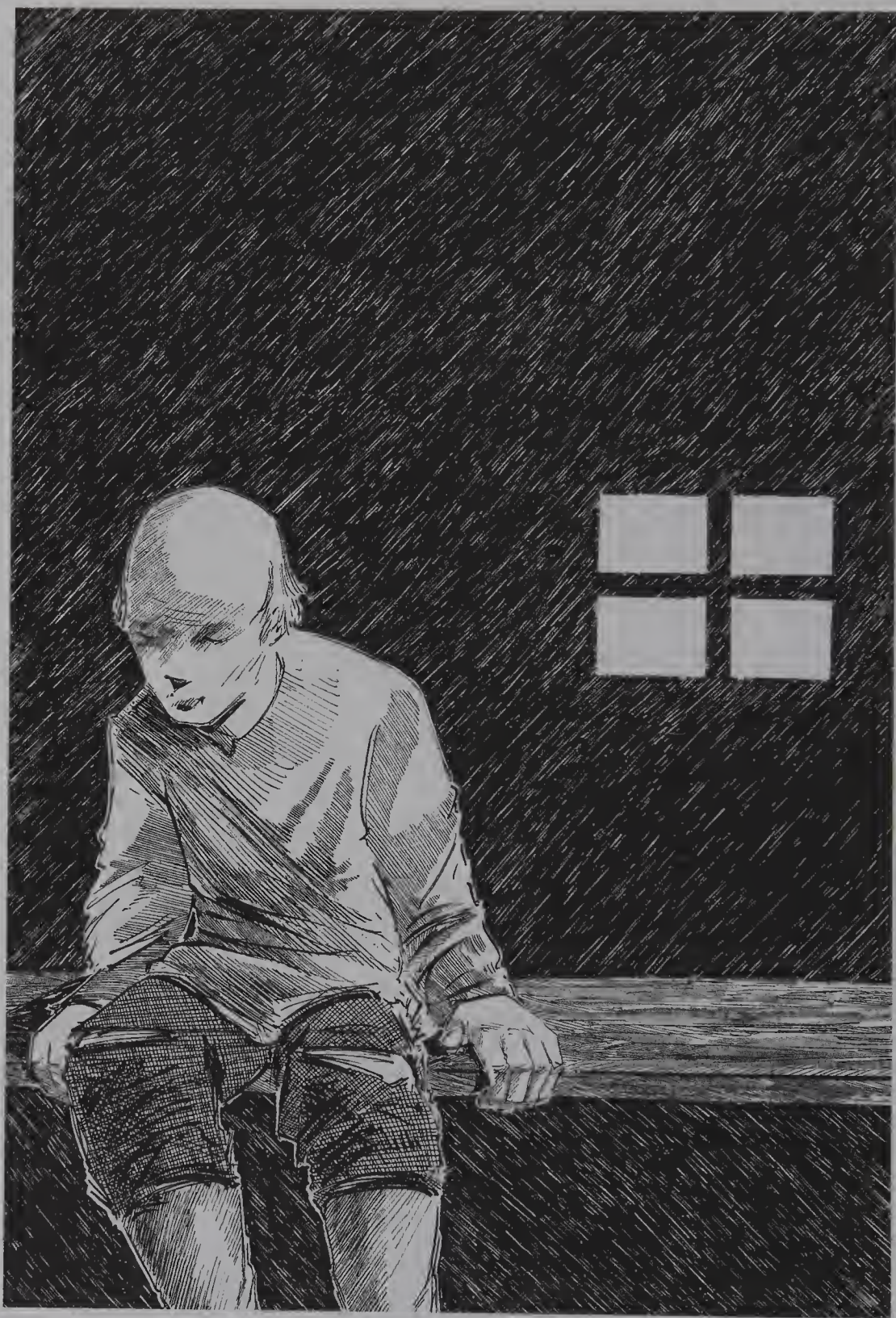
WARRANT FOR GILES CORY: SALEM, APRIL 18TH, 1692

There being a complaint this day against Giles Cory for high suspicion of sundry acts of witchcraft done upon the bodies of Ann Putnam Jr., Mercy Lewis, Abigail Williams, Mary Walcott, and Elizabeth Hubbard.





You are therefore, in their Majesties' name, hereby
required to apprehend and bring before us Giles Cory.



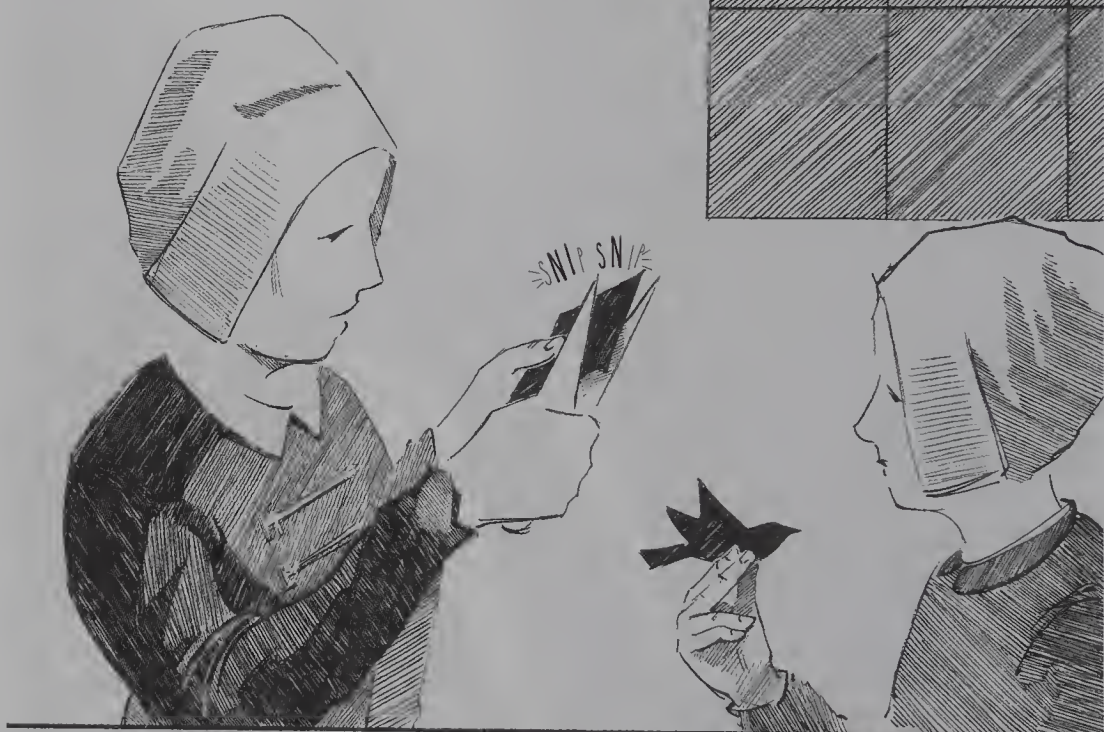
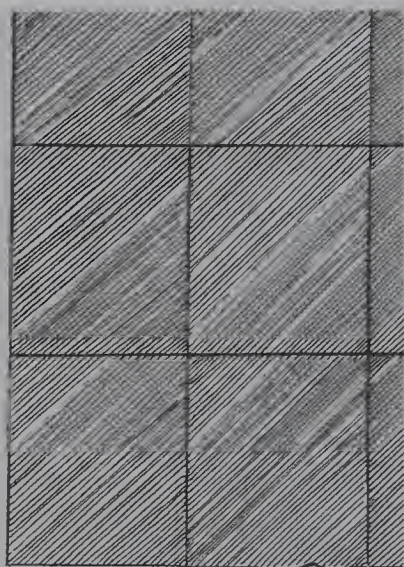






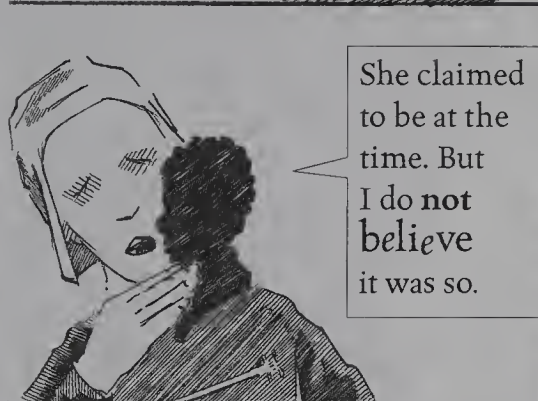
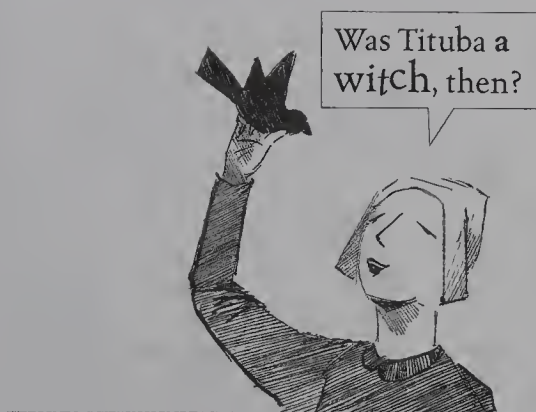
X
THE TELLING
1706

If I were to **start** from the very **beginning**, I should tell you we girls as a group believed in **witchcraft**. We were told **such stories** by the servant of the Reverend Parris, Tituba.

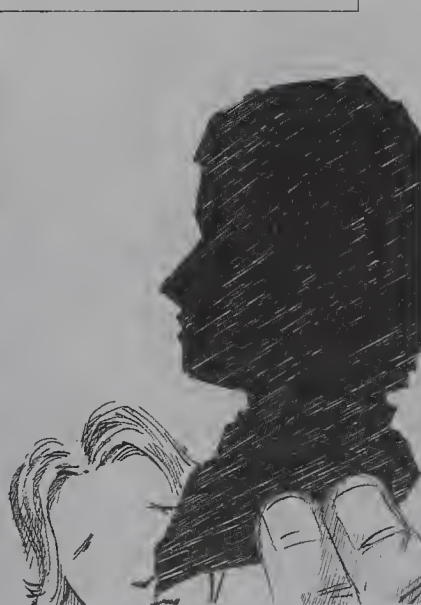
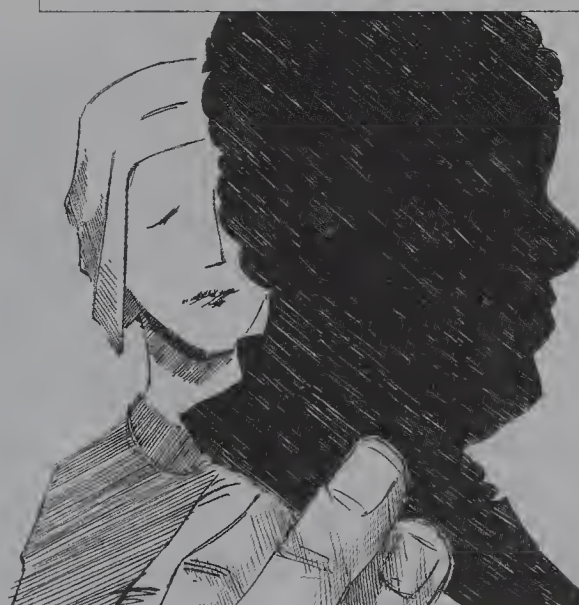


But we **believed** it, initially, as something of **fancy** to pass the long hours of those **winter days**. It was at his home, with his daughter, Elizabeth, that Tituba would tell us these tales of **witches** and **spirits** from **her home** in Barbados.

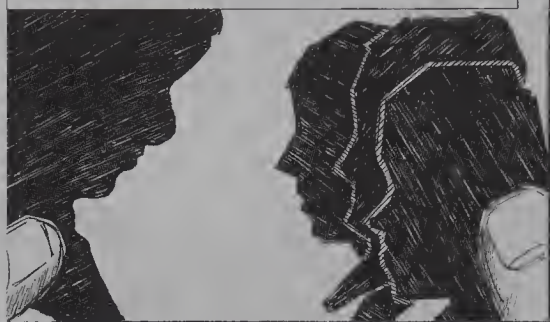




Tituba **intended no harm** toward us. The **stories** she told us were meant as **games**. It started when Elizabeth Parris wondered who she would **marry** when she was no longer a child. Tituba told us that in Barbados, people used powers to **see into the future**.



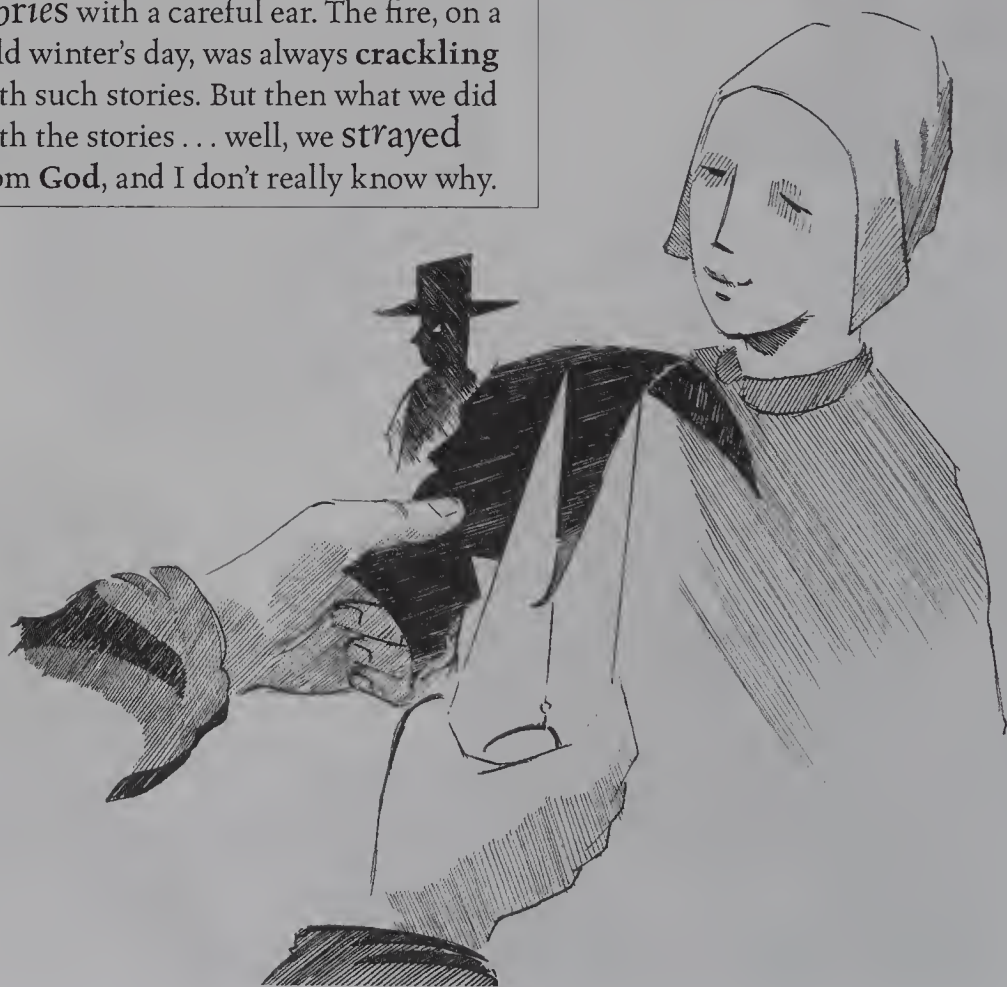
She said if you **crack** an egg and let the **clear liquid** drip into a **vessel** of water, it would take the shape of the **man** you are to **marry**.



Did it work?



Who can say? We **listened** to Tituba's **stories** with a careful ear. The fire, on a cold winter's day, was always **crackling** with such stories. But then what we did with the stories . . . well, we **strayed** from **God**, and I don't really know why.



We first **accused** those
who were not held in
high moral opinion:
Sarah Bishop, Sarah Good,
and even Tituba herself.

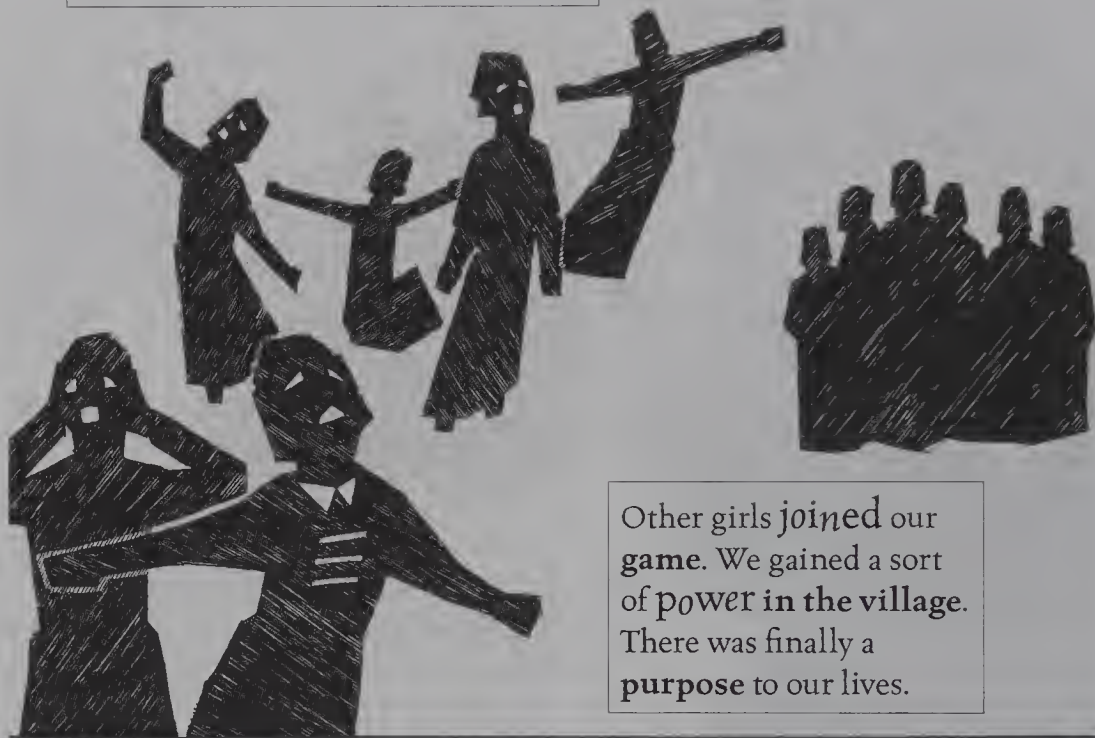


The days grew more **interesting** to
us. The **harsh tedium** of our New
England lives seemed to **disappear**.

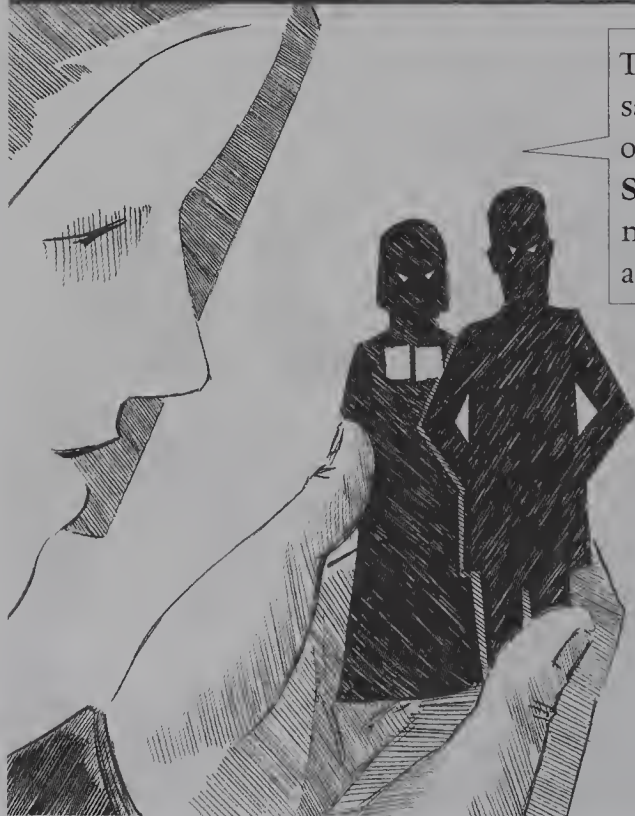
We said these people **tormented** us. We said their
specters entered our windows **in the night**, we saw
them dancing in the **deep woods**, around a fire.



We contorted our bodies in agony.

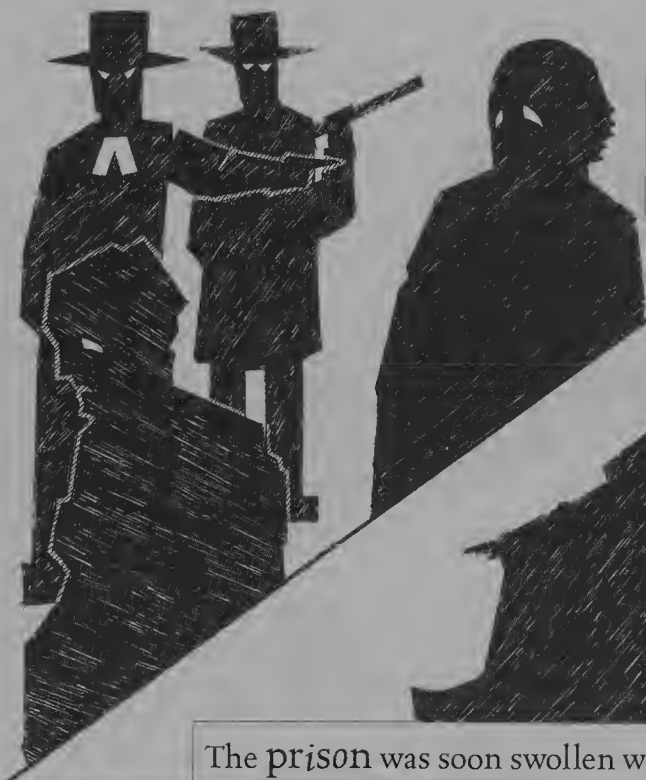


Other girls joined our game. We gained a sort of power in the village. There was finally a purpose to our lives.

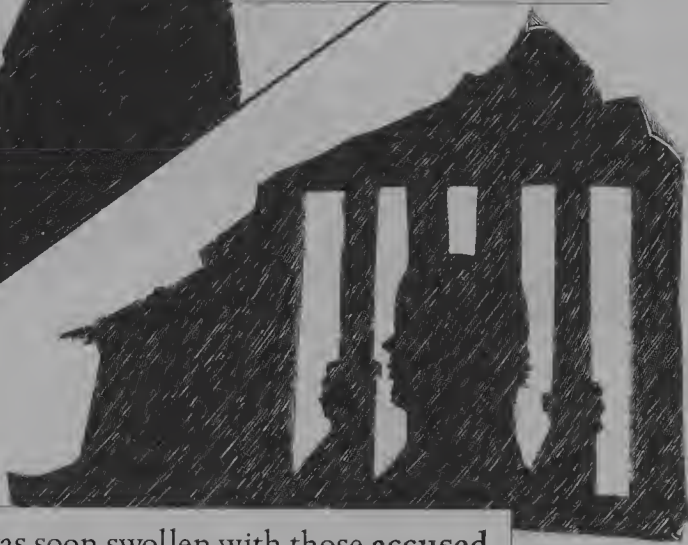


The belief in what we were saying grew so strong. It rushed over the town like a plague. Screams were always heard in the night. Everyone feared being accused. Everyone feared us.

Soon, we accused many more. Our mothers and fathers began suggesting names of those practicing witchcraft. Word got all the way to Governor Phips, and a court was formed to try the accused. The madness arrived and we could not turn back.



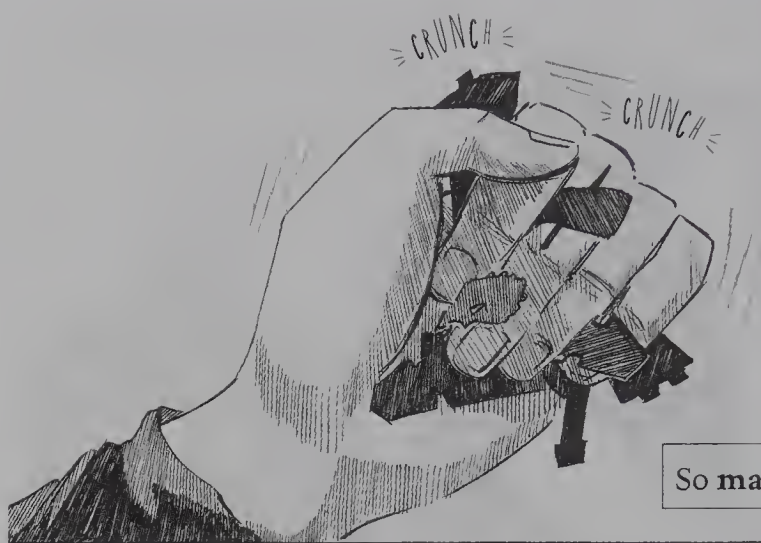
People were **examined**, **embarrassed**, quickly found guilty. We told **lies** before **God**; we swore upon his name.



The **prison** was soon swollen with those **accused**.



I **accused** Martha Cory. I said she had a yellow bird in her hands. We began to **throw fits**, said we were bitten, pinched, haunted by these witches of Salem. We **begged** the magistrates to make them stop. The magistrates **believed our words** and **judged** swiftly.



So **many** died because of me.

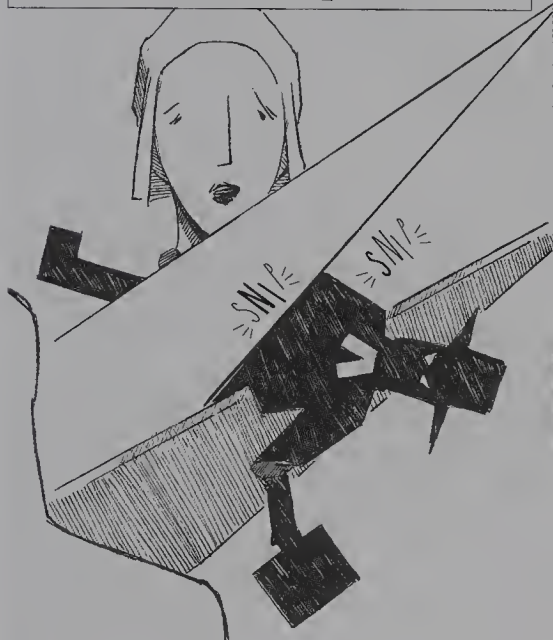


I desire an **audience** with
them now that I am not a child.
I speak to **their ears** nightly.



We sent twenty-
four **souls** to
the **grave** with
our stories of
witchcraft.

We proved there is no match in this world for **fear** and **superstition**.

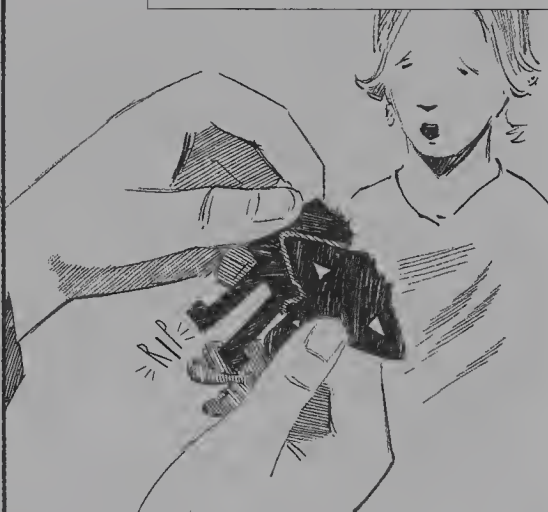


No match for the **power** of a word.



And may my **siblings**, who I have **raised** ...

There is no protection from **damnation** when you lead the country into this **fear**.

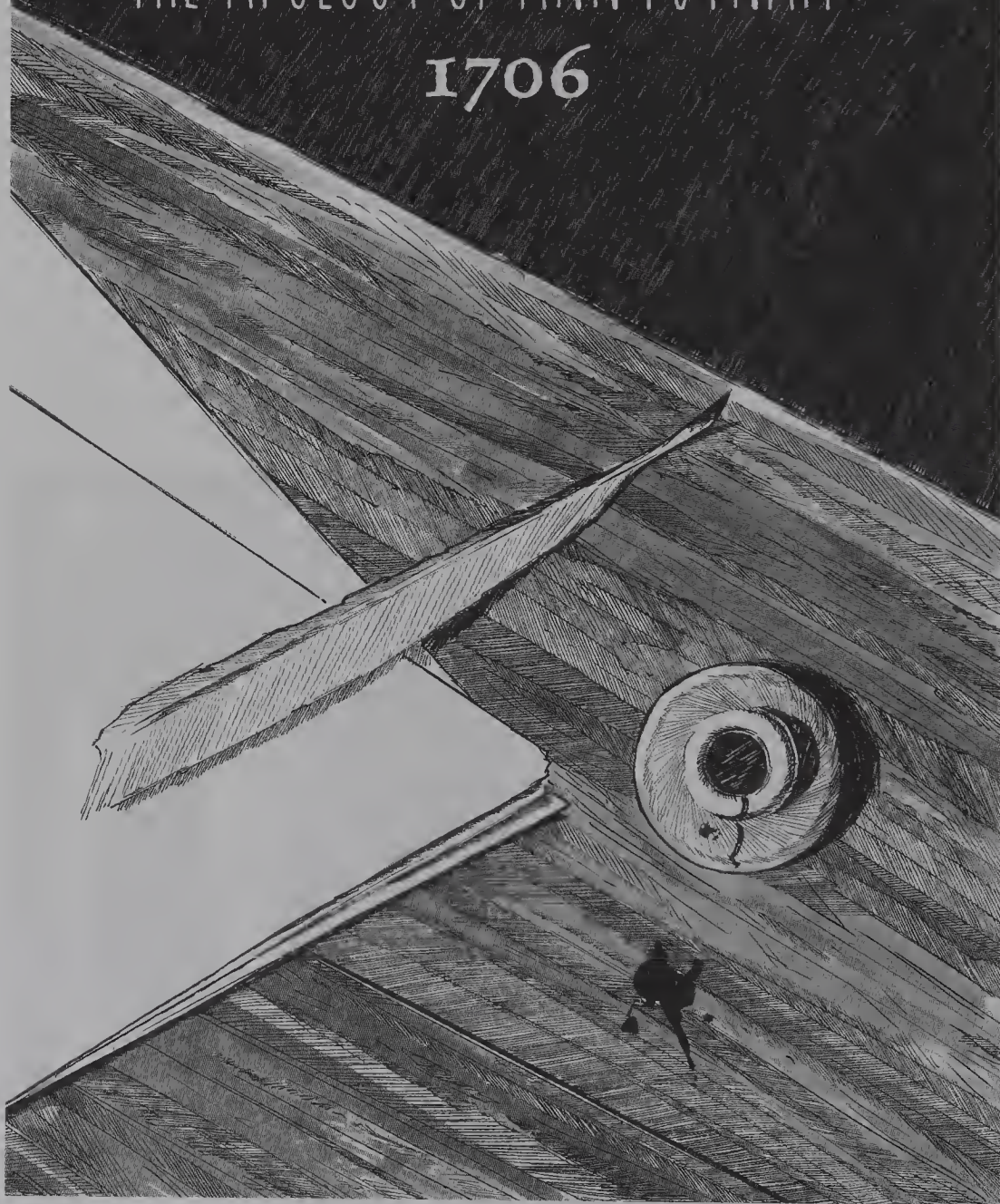


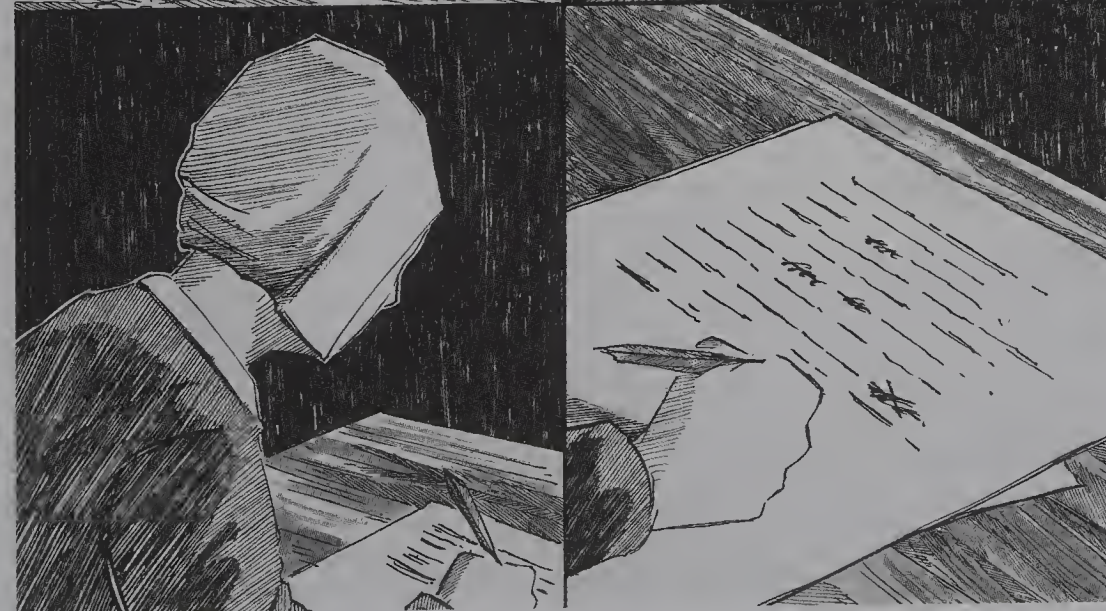
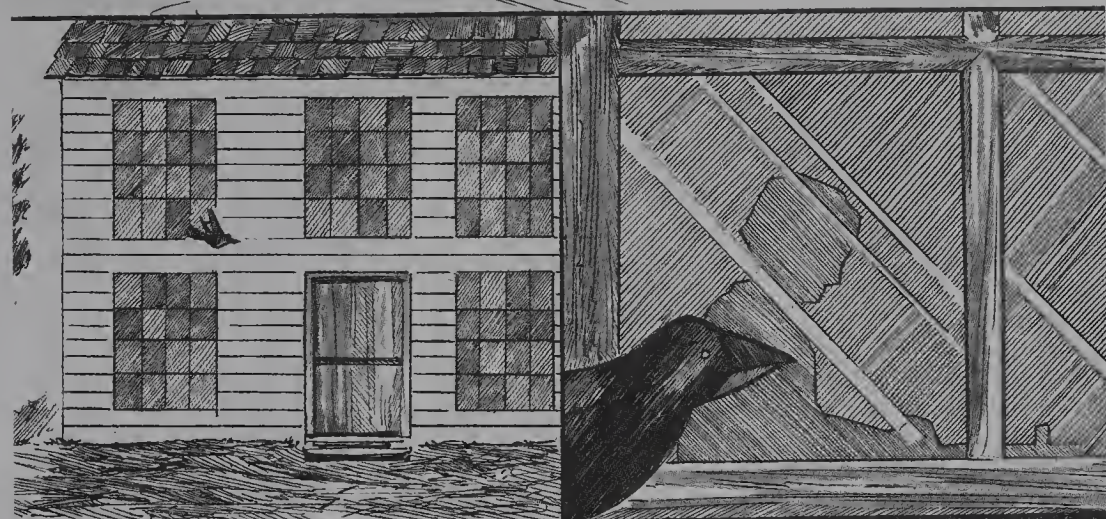
May my mother **hear** this now, for she and Father were the ones **under** the spell of Satan, not of God.



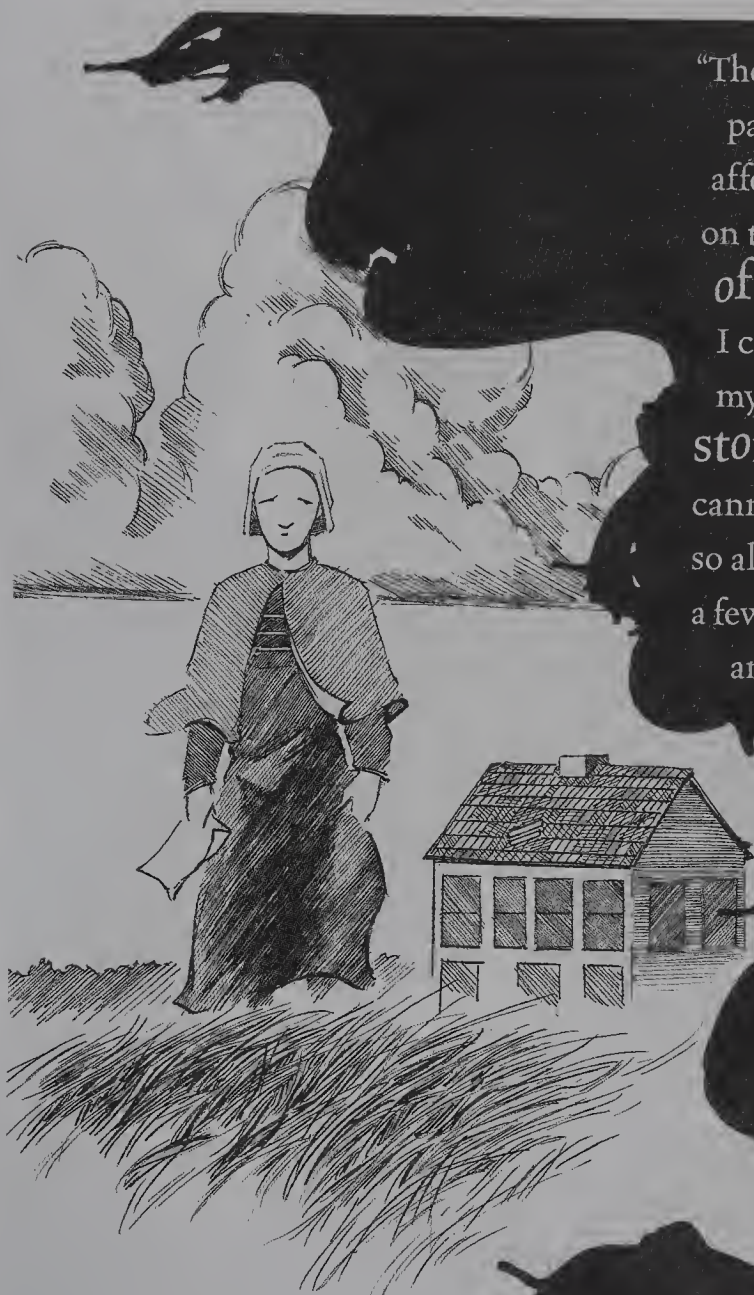
... remain **good**.

XI
THE APOLOGY OF ANN PUTNAM JR.
1706





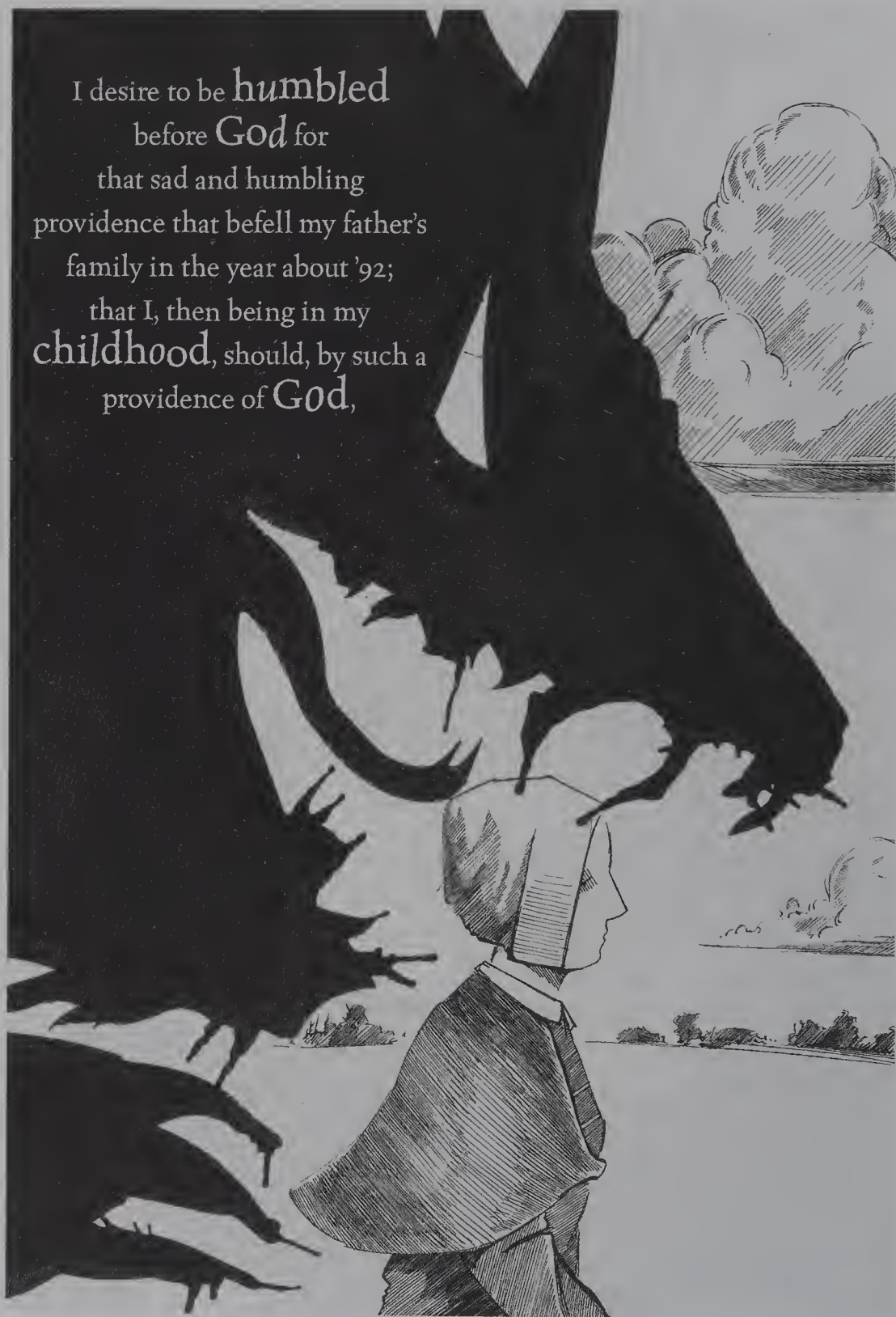


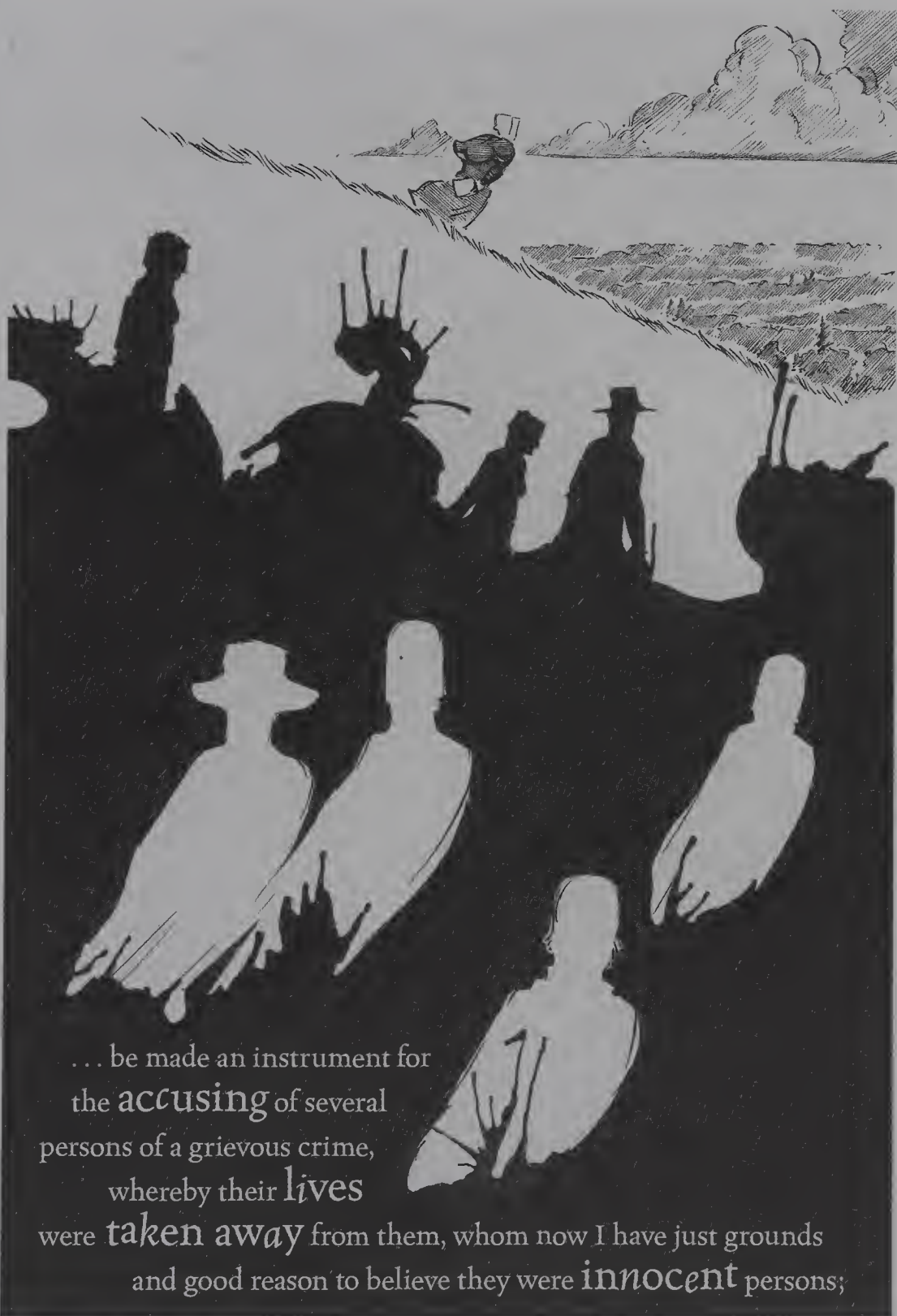


"These years have gone
past and I am still
afforded **time**
on this ground instead
of **beneath it.**

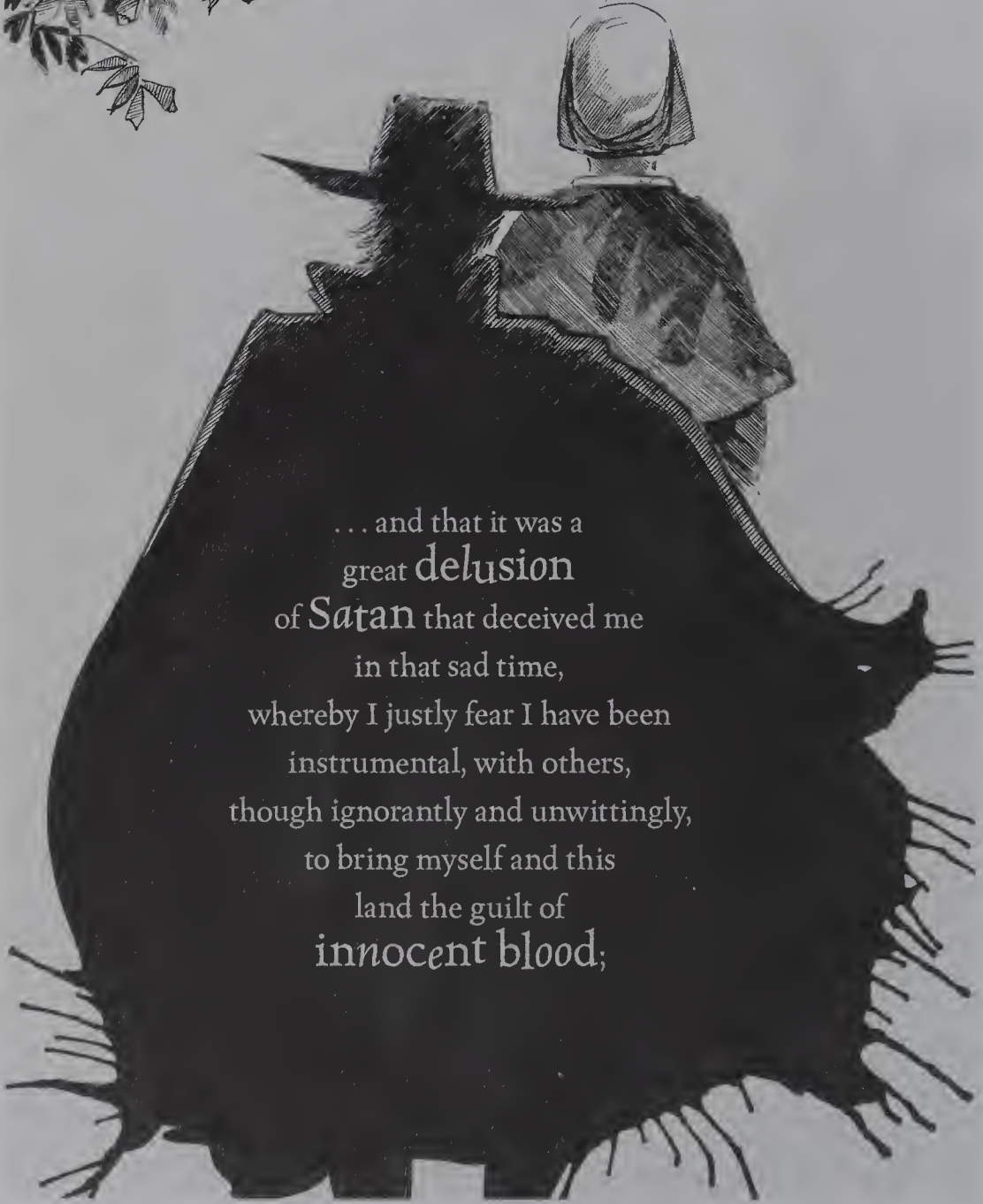
I cannot change
my childhood
stories, and I
cannot raise the **dead**,
so all I can do is say
a few things about it,
and hope that the
Lord look
upon me
favorably, as
he did before
my childhood
games took
the lives of
innocent folks.

I desire to be **humbled**
before **God** for
that sad and humbling
providence that befell my father's
family in the year about '92;
that I, then being in my
childhood, should, by such a
providence of **God**,

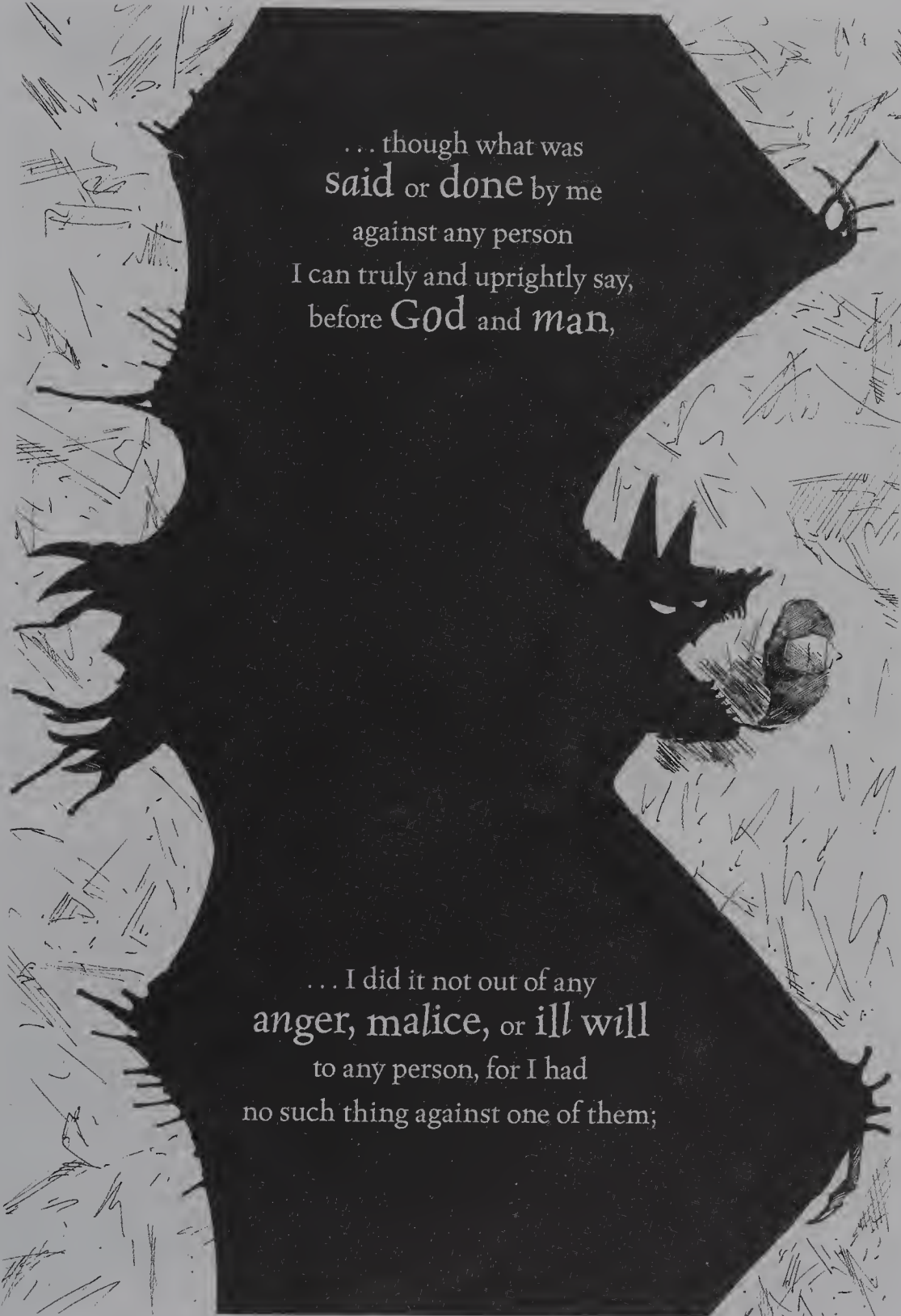




... be made an instrument for
the **accusing** of several
persons of a grievous crime,
whereby their **lives**
were **taken away** from them, whom now I have just grounds
and good reason to believe they were **innocent** persons;

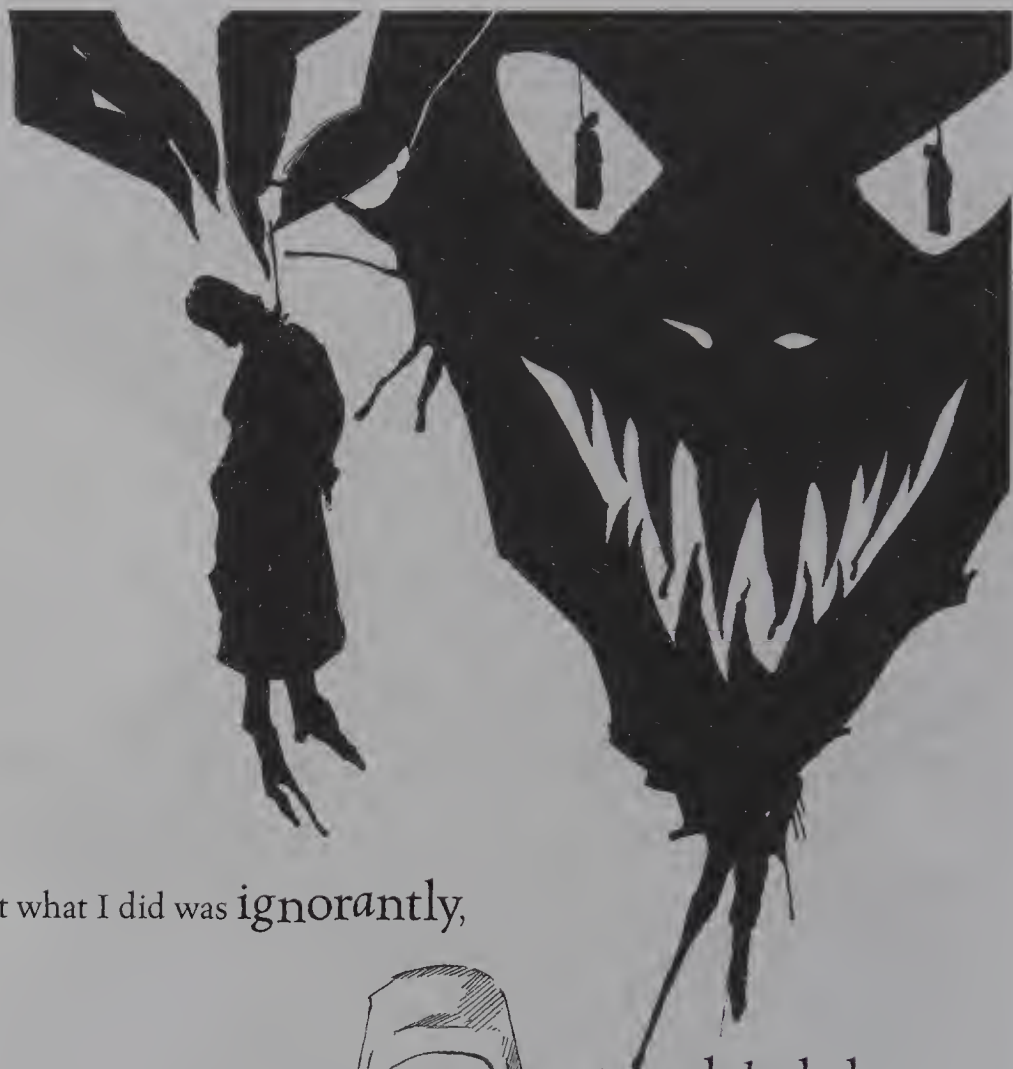


... and that it was a
great **delusion**
of **Satan** that deceived me
in that sad time,
whereby I justly fear I have been
instrumental, with others,
though ignorantly and unwittingly,
to bring myself and this
land the guilt of
innocent blood;



... though what was
said or done by me
against any person
I can truly and uprightly say,
before God and man,

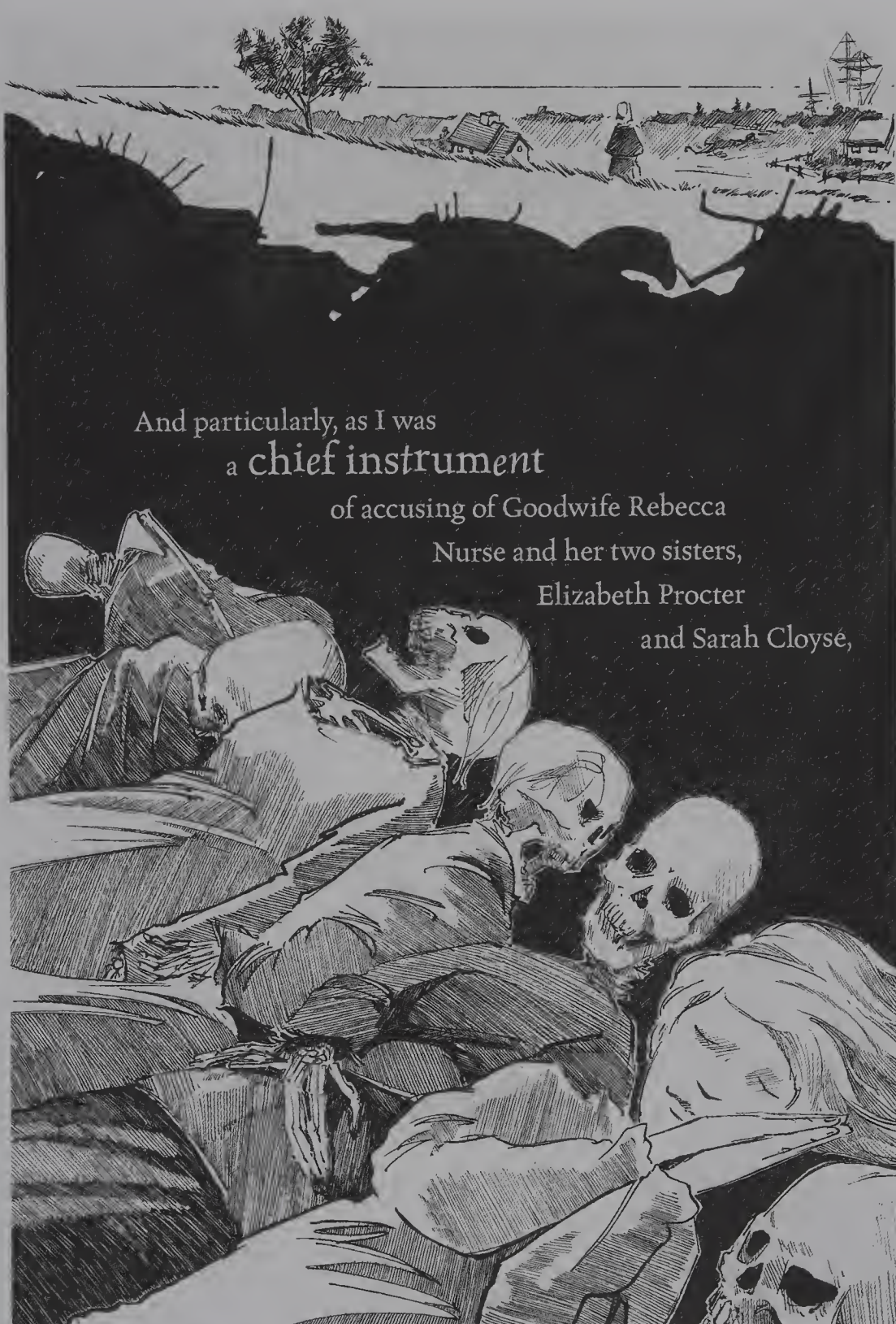
... I did it not out of any
anger, malice, or ill will
to any person, for I had
no such thing against one of them;



... but what I did was **ignorantly**,

being **deluded** by Satan.

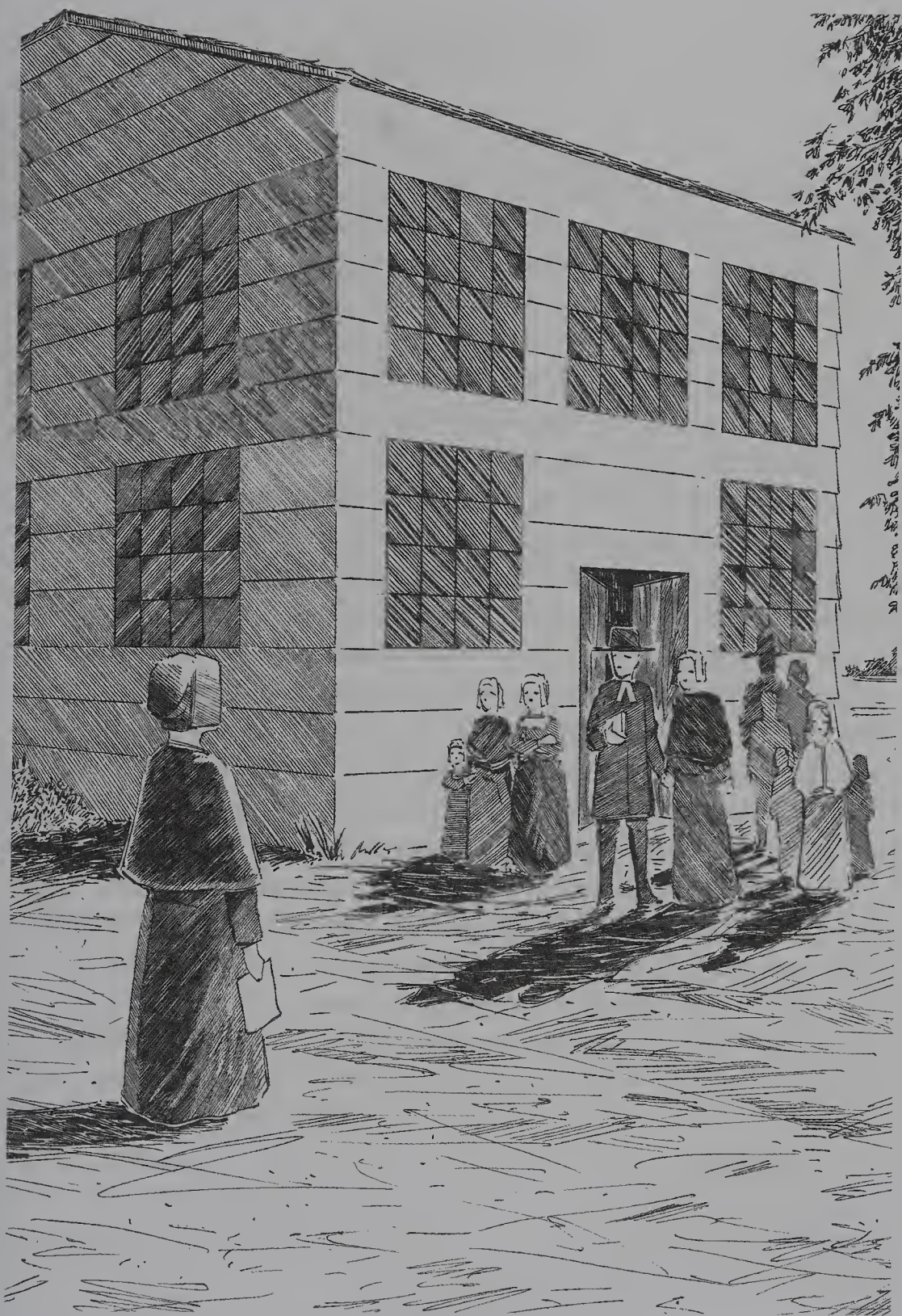




And particularly, as I was
a **chief instrument**
of accusing of Goodwife Rebecca
Nurse and her two sisters,
Elizabeth Procter
and Sarah Cloyse,

... I desire to **lie in the dust**,
and to be humbled for it,
in that I was a cause, with others,
of so sad a calamity to them and their
families; for which I desire to lie in the dust,
and earnestly **beg forgiveness**
of **God**, and from all those unto whom
I have given just cause of **sorrow**
and **offence**, whose relations were
taken away or accused."





AFTERWORD

IN THE COLD NEW ENGLAND WINTER OF 1692, A GROUP OF girls in the village of Salem, Massachusetts, began to fall ill. The first to display any kind of symptoms was the young daughter of the town's minister.

The bodies of the afflicted girls contorted into mysterious fits. No medical explanation could be diagnosed. The town physician came to a damning conclusion: The girls had been bewitched, and the tormentors needed to be found. This was secretly what the girls had hoped for.

The coming months saw accusations. The afflicted girls pointed out those who they claimed had been tormenting them, by throwing their specters and using black magic deep into the night to harm the innocents and make them sign the Devil's book—or so they claimed.

In March 1692, a court was hastily formed to try those being accused of such a heinous crime in a community devoted to God. None of these appointed magistrates were actual judges. As history now shows, the accused were first guilty in the eyes of the people, and then had to be proven innocent. The girls started by pointing out three women as their tormentors. Many more were soon accused.

The group of afflicted girls grew in size, many of their friends joining the ranks of those claiming to be harmed by witches. The accused were stripped, examined, and then dragged to prison to await trial. At trial, they had two basic options: The first was to admit to practicing witchcraft, lose all of their land and worldly possessions, and live a life of shame. The second choice was to deny that they had strayed from God and be found guilty. With this choice, they would be put to death.

Though there was never any more evidence beyond a group of young girls displaying public fits, armed with fanciful stories of specters, midnight hauntings, and deals with Satan himself, twenty-four townsfolk died because of their accusations.

Twenty-four people were too faithful to God and too proud to allow a group of children to decide their path.

The Salem witch trials were swift, lasting less than half a year. But in that time, so many were stripped of their homes, their dignity, and their lives.

In the end, the court was dismantled. The governor pardoned the remaining accused and imprisoned. There was simply never enough evidence to justify how far this had all gone. Most people began to believe that the girls had been lying all along, wielding the power of superstition and fear, causing an effective mass hysteria.

The girls never faced trial or discipline for what was now believed to be a hoax. Nearly 200 people had been accused of witchcraft, but the girls never had to take responsibility for the lives they had shattered.

They never even uttered a word of apology, less one: Ann Putnam Jr.

Ann continued living in Salem with this sadness in her heart. She lived every day with true guilt, with more weight than any of us can imagine. Her life was fraught with illness, and she never married. In the year 1699, both of her parents passed away. Ann spent her remaining years with her siblings, nine in all, trying to move on and live a life of normalcy.

She wrote this letter of apology in 1706. It was read before the church congregation, as Ann hoped to be let in as a member once again. She desired to be humbled before God, and in this desire, she humbled herself before the community.


Ten years later, at the age of thirty-seven, Ann Putnam Jr. died.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Jakob Crane is a writer and visual artist. He has written and illustrated for numerous newspapers and publications throughout New England. As a boy, he trotted across the stone-walled landscape into early American cemeteries and battlegrounds. Crane developed a love of the tales and history of New England; that interest is reflected in *Lies in the Dust*, his first graphic novel.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR:

Timothy Decker is the author/illustrator of the critically acclaimed books *The Letter Home*, *For Liberty: The Story of the Boston Massacre*, *Run Far, Run Fast*, and *The Punk Ethic*. He works exclusively in pen and ink, often plays the blues on his cigar-box guitar to the delight of cryptozoological animals, and is known to enjoy the odd cup of tea from time to time. His weekly, autobiographical web comic can be found at timothydecker.com. He lives in Jersey City, New Jersey.



... I desire to lie in the dust,
and to be humbled for it,
in that I was a cause, with others,
of so sad a calamity...

In Salem's dark days of 1692 and 1693, young girls pointed fingers and accused others of witchcraft, sentencing them to torture or even death. When the cloud lifted, and the accusations were shown to be false, the girls faced little, if any, penalty.

Were they sorry? No one knows.

Only one girl, Ann Putnam Jr., felt moved to show remorse publicly. Fourteen years after the trials, Ann wrote a letter of apology. This is her story.

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